



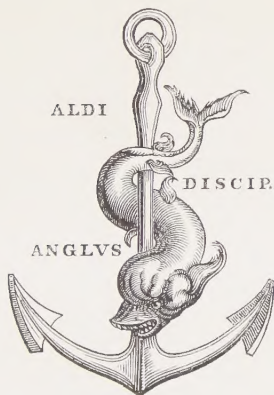
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THE
POETICAL WORKS OF
GEOFFREY CHAUCER



WITH MEMOIR BY SIR HARRIS NICOLAS



VOL IV

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THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE.

MANY menne sain that in sweveninges,
There n'is but fables and lesinges :
But menne may some sweven seene,
Which hardely that false ne been,
But afterward ben apparaunt :
This may I drawe to warraunt
An authour that hight Macrobes,
That halte not dreames false ne lees,
But undoth us the avisioun,
That whilom mette king Cipoun.

And who so sayth, or weneth it be
A jape, or else nicete
To wene that dreames after fall,
Let who so liste a foole me call.
For this trow I, and say for me,
That dreames signifiunce be
Of good and harme to many wightes,
That dreamen in hir sleep a nightes
Full many thinges covertly,
That fallen after all openly.

Within my twentie yeere of age,
When that love taketh his courage
Of younge folke, I wente soone
To bed, as I was wont to doone :

And fast I slept, and in sleeping,
Me mette such a swevening,
That liked me wondrous wele,
But in that sweven is never a dele
That it n'is afterward befall,
Right as this dreame woll tell us all.

Now this dreame woll I rime aright,
To make your heartes gay and light :
For love it prayeth, and also
Commaundeth me that it be so.

And if there any aske me,
Whether that it be he or she,
How this booke which is here
Shall hatte, that I rede you here :
It is the Romaunt of the Rose,
In which all the art of love I close.

The matter faire is of to make,
God graunt me in gree that she it take
For whom that it begonnen is,
And that is she, that hath ywis
So mokel prise, and thereto she
So worthie is beloved to be,
That she well ought of prise and right,
Be cleped Rose of everie wight.
That it was May me thoughte tho,
It is five yere or more ago,
That it was May, thus dreamed me,
In time of love and jolitie,
That all thing ginneth waxen gay :
For there is neither buske nor hay
In May, that it n'll shrouded bene,
And it with newe leves wrene :
These woodes eke recoveren grene,
That drie in winter ben to sene,

And the erth waxeth proud withall,
For swote dewes that on it fall,
And the poore estate forget,
In which that winter had it set :
And than become the ground so proude,
That it wol have a newe shroude,
And maketh so queint his robe and faire,
That it had hewes an hundred paire,
Of grasse and floures, of Inde and Pers,
And many hewes full divers :
That is the robe I mean ywis,
Through which the ground to praisen is.

The birdes, that han left hir song,
While they han suffred cold full strong,
In wethers grille, and derke to sight,
Ben in May for the Sunne bright,
So glad, that they shew in singing,
That in hir heart is such liking,
That they mote singen and ben light :
Than doth the nightingale her might,
To maken noyse, and singen blithe :
Than is blisfull many a sithe,
The chelaundre, and the popingaye,
Than younge folke entenden aye,
For to ben gay and amorous,
The time is then so savorous.

Harde is his heart that loveth nought
In May, whan all this mirth is wrought,
Whan he may on these braunches here
The smalle birdes singen clere
Hir blisfull swete song piteous,
And in this season delitous :
When love affirmeth all thing,
Me thought one night, in my sleeping,

Right in my bed full readily,
That it was by the morrow early,
And up I rose, and gan me cloth,
Anone I wysshe mine hondes both,
A silver needle forth I drow,
Out of an aguiler queint ynow,
And gan this needle thread anone,
For out of towne me list to gone,
The sound of birdes for to heare
That on the buskes singen cleare,
In the swete season that lefe is,
With a thred basting my slevis,
Alone I went in my playing,
The smal foules song hearkening,
That payned hem full many a paire,
To sing on bowes blossomed faire :
Jolife and gay, full of gladnesse,
Toward a river gan I me dresse,
That I heard renne faste by,
For fairer playeng none saw I
Than playen me by that rivere :
For from an hill that stood there nere,
Come downe the stream full stiffe and bold,
Clere was the water, and as cold
As any well is, sooth to saine,
And somedele lasse it was than Saine,
But it was straiter, weleaway,
And never saw I ere that day,
The water that so wele liked me,
And wonder glad was I to se
That lusty place, and that rivere :
And with that water that ran so clere,
My face I wysshe, tho saw I wele,
The bottome ypaved everidele

With gravel, full of stones shene,
The meadowes softe, sote, and grene,
Beet right upon the water side,
Full clere was than the morowe tide,
And full attempre out of drede,
Tho gan I walken thorow the mede,
Downward aye in my playing,
The rivers side coösting.

And when I had a while ygone,
I saw a garden right anone,
Full long and broad, and everidele
Enclosed was, and walled wele,
With hie walles enbatailed,
Portrayed without, and well entayled
With many riche portraitures,
And both the images and peintures,
Can I beholde besely,
And I woll tell you readily,
Of thilke images the semblaunce,
As farre as I have remembraunce.

Amidde saw I HATE stonde,
That for her wrath and yre and onde,
Seemed to be a moveresse,
An angry wight, a chideresse,
And ful of gile, and fell courage,
By semblaunt was that ilke image,
And she was nothing wele araide,
But like a wode woman afraide,
Yfrounced foule was her visage,
And grinning for dispitous rage,
Her nose snorted up for tene,
Full hidous was she for to sene,
Full foule and rustie was she this,
Her head ywriten was ywis

Full grimly with a great towaile.

An image of another entayle,
Alifte halte was her fast by,
Her name above her head saw I,
And she was called FELONY.

Another image, that VILLANY
Ycleped was, saw I and fonde
Upon the wall on her right honde.
Villany was like somedele
That other image, and trusteth wele
She seemed a wicked creature,
By countenance in portreiture,
She seemed be full despitous,
And eke full proude and outrageous.

Well coud he paint I undertake,
That such an image coude make :
Full foule and chorlych seemed she,
And eke villainous for to be,
And little coulde of norture,
To worship any creature.

And next was painted COVETISE,
That eggeth folke in many a gise,
To take and yeve right nought againe,
And great treasures up to laine.

And that is she, that for usure
Leneth to many a creature
The lasse for the more winning,
So covetous is her brenning,
And that is she for pennies fele,
That teacheth for to robbe and stele
These theeves, and these smale harlotes,
And that is routlie, for by hir throttes,
Full many one hongeth at the last :
She maketh folke compasse and cast

To taken other folkes thing,
Through robberie, or miscoveting.
And that is she that maketh treachours,
And she maketh false pleadours,
That with hir termes and hir domes,
Done maidens, children, and eke gromes,
Her heritage to forgo :
Full crooked were her hondes two,
For covetise is ever woode,
To gripen other folkes goode.

Covetise, for her winning,
Full lese hath other mennes thing.

Another image set saw I,
Nexste Covetise fast by,
And she was cleped AVARICE,
Full foule in painting was that vice,
Full sad and caitife was she eke,
And also grene as any leke,
So evil hewed was her colour,
Her seemed to have lived in langour,
She was like thing for hunger dead,
That lad her life onely by bread
Kneden with eisell strong and egre,
And thereto she was leane and megre,
And she was clad full poorely,
All in an olde torne courtpy,
As she were all with dogges torne,
And both behind and eke beforne
Clouted was she beggerly.

A mantle honge her faste by,
Upon a benche weake and small,
A burnette cote hong there withall,
Furred with no minevere,
But with a furre rough of heere,

Of lambe skinnes heavy and blake,
It was so old I undertake.
For Avarice to cloath her wele,
Ne hasteth her never a dele,
For certainly it were her loth
To wearen of that ilke cloth,
And if it were forweared, she
Woulde have full great nicete
Of clothing, er she bought her newe,
All were it bad of woll and hewe.

This Avarice held in her hand,
A purse that honge by a band,
And that she hid and bond so strong,
Men must abide wonder long,
Out of the purse er ther come aught,
For that ne commeth in her thought,
It was not certaine her entent,
That fro that purse a peny went.

And by that image nigh ynough,
Was peinted ENVY, that never lough,
Nor never well in her heart ferde
But if she either saw or herde
Some great mischaunce, or great disease,
Nothing ne may so much her please
As mischeife and misaventure,
Or when she seeth discomfiture
Upon any worthy man fall,
Than liketh her right well withall.
She is full glad in hir courage,
If she see any great lineage
Be brought to naught in shamefull wise :
And if a man in honour rise,
Or by his wit, or by his prowesse,
Of that hath she great heavinesse,

For trusteth well she goeth nie wood,
When any chaunce happeth good.

Envy is of such cruelte,
That fayth ne trouth holdeth she,
To friend ne fellow, bad or good.
Ne she hath kinne none of her blood
That she n'is full hir enemye,
She nolde, I dare saine hardely
Her owne father fared wele,
And sore abieth she everie dele
Her malice, and her male talent :
For she is in so great turment
And hate such, when folke doth good,
That nye she melteth for pure wood,
Her hert kerveth and so breaketh
That God the people well awreaketh.

Envy ywis shall never let,
Some blame upon the folke to set.
I trowe that if Envy ywis,
Knew the beste man that is,
On this side or beyond the see,
Yet somewhat lacken him would she :
And if he were so hende and wise,
That she ne might all abate his prise,
Yet would she blame his worthinesse,
Or by her wordes make it lesse.
I sawe Envy in that painting,
Had a wonderfull looking,
For she ne looked but awrie,
Or overwhart, all baggingly.
And she had a foule usage,
She might looke in no visage
Of man ne woman, forth right plaine,
But shette her one eye for disdaine,

So for envie brenned shee
When she might any man see
That faire, or worthy were, or wise,
Or else stood in folkes prise.

Sorow was painted next Envy
Upon that wall of masonry :
But well was seene in her colour
That she had lived in langour :
Her seemed to have the jaundice,
Not halfe so pale was Avarice,
Ne nothing like of leannesse,
For sorowe, thought, and great distresse,
That she had suffred daie and night,
Made her yellow, and nothing bright :
Full sad, pale, and megre also,
Was never wight yet half so wo
As that her seemed for to be,
Nor so fulfilled with yre as she,
I trow that no wight might her please
Nor doe that thing that might her ease,
Nor she ne would her sorow slake,
Nor comfort none unto her take,
So depe was her wo begonne,
And eke her heart in anger ronne,
A sorowfull thing wel seemed she :
Nor she had nothing slowe be
For to-scratchen all her face
And for to-rent in many place
Her clothes, and for to teare her swire,
As she that was fulfilled of yre,
And all to-torne lay eke her heere
About her shoulders, here and there,
As she that had it all to-rent
For anger and for male talent.

And eke I tell you certainly
How that she wept full tenderly :
In worlde n'is wight so hard of heart
That had seene her sorowes smart
That nolde have had of her pite,
So wo begone a thing was she.
She all to-dasht her selfe for wo
And smote togider her hands two,
To sorrow was she full ententife,
That wofull retchelesse caitife
Her rought little of playing,
Or of clipping or kissing ;
For who so sorrowfull is in heart
Him luste not to play ne start,
Nor for to dauncen, ne to sing,
Ne may his heart in temper bring
To make joy on even or morrow,
For joy is contrarie unto sorrow.

ELDE was painted after this,
That shorter was a foot ywis
Than she was wont in her yonghede,
Unneth her selfe she might fede,
So feeble and eke so old was she
That faded was all her beaute.
Full salow was waxen her colour,
Her head for hore was white as flour,
Ywis great qualme ne were it none,
Ne sinne, although her life were gone.
All woxen was her body unwelde
And drie and dwined all for elde,
A foule forwelked thing was she
That whilom round and soft had be,
Her heeres shoken fast withall
As from her hedde they woulde fall :

Her face frounced and forpined,
And both her hondes lorne fordwined :
So old she was that she ne went
A foot, but it were by potent.
The time that passeth night and daye,
And restlesse travayleth aye,
And stealeth from us so privyly,
That to us seemeth sikerly
That it in one point dwelleth ever,
And certes it ne resteth never,
But goeth so fast, and passeth aye,
That there n'is man that thinke maye
What time that now present is,
Asketh at these clerkes this,
For menne thinke it readily
Three times been passed by
The time that may not sojourne
But goth, and may never retourne,
As water that down runneth aye
But never droppe returne may :
There may nothing as time endure,
Metall, nor earthly creature,
For all thing it frette and shall,
The time eke that chaungeth all,
And all doth waxe, and fostred be,
And all thing destroyeth he.
The time that eldeth our auncestours
And eldeth kinges and emperours,
And that us all shall overcommen
Er that death us shall have nomen,
The time that hath all in welde
To elden folke, had made her elde
So inly, that to my weting
She might helpe her selfe nothing,

But tourned ayen unto childhede ;
She had nothing her selfe to lede
Ne wit ne pithe in her hold
More than a childe of two yere old.

But nathelesse I trow that she
Was faire sometime, and fresh to se,
When she was in her rightfull age :
But she was past all that passage
And was a doted thing becommen :
A furred cappe on had she nomen ;
Well had she clad her selfe and warme,
For cold might els doen her harme,
These olde folke have alway cold,
Hir kind is such, when they been old.

Another thing was down there writ,
That seemed like an ipocrite,
And it was cleped Pope holy,
That ilke is she, that privily
Ne spared never a wicked deed,
When men of her taken none heed,
And maketh her outward precious,
With pale visage and piteous,
And seemeth a simple creature,
But ther n'is no misadventure,
That she ne thinketh in her courage :
Full like to her was thilke image,
That maked was like her semblaunce,
She was ful simple of countenaunce.
And she was clothed and eke shod,
As she were for the love of God
Y-olden to religion,
Such seemed her devotion.

A psalter held she fast in hond,
And busily she gan to fond

To make many a faint prayere,
To God, and to his saintes dere :
Ne she was gay, fresh, ne jolife,
But seemed to be full ententife
To goode workes, and to faire,
And thereto she had on an haire.

Ne certes she was fatte nothing
But seemed werie for fasting,
Of colour pale and dead was she,
From her the gates aie warned be
Of Paradise, that blisfull place,
For such folke maken leane hir grace :
As Christ sayth in his Evangile,
To get hem prise in towne a while,
And for a little glorie vaine,
They lesen God and eke his raigne.

And alderlast of everichone,
Was painted POVERT all alone,
That not a peny had in hold,
Although she her clothes sold,
And though she shuld an honged be,
For naked as a worme was she,
And if the weather stormie were,
For cold she shuld have died there.

She ne had on but a straite old sacke,
And many a cloute on it there stacke,
This was her cote, and her mantele,
No more was there never a dele
To cloath her with ; I undertake,
Great lesen hadde she to quake :
And she was put, that I of talke,
Ferre fro these other, up in an halke,
There lurked and there coured she,
For poore thing, where so it be,

Is ſhamefaſt, and deſpiſed aie :
Accuſed may well be that daie,
That poore man conceived is,
For God wote all to ſeld ywis
Is any poore man well yfed,
Or well arrayed or yceled,
Or well beloved, in ſuch wiſe,
In honour that he may ariſe.

All theſe thinges well avided,
As I have you er this deviſed,
With gold and azure over all,
Depainted were upon the wall.
Square was the wall, and high ſomdele
Encloſed, and ybarred wele,
In ſtead of hedge, was that gardin,
Come never ſhepherde therein :
Into that gardin, well ywrought,
Who ſo that me coud have brought,
By ladders or elſe by degree,
It would well have liked mee,
For ſuch ſolace, ſuch joy, and pleie,
I trow that never man ne ſeie,
As was in that place delicious :
The gardin was not daungerous,
To herborow birdes many one,
So rich a yere was never none
Of birdes ſong, and braunches grene,
Therein were birdes mo I wene,
Than been in all the realme of Fraunce :
Full bliſfull was the accordaunce,
Of ſwete pitous ſong they made,
For all this worlde it ought glade.

And I my ſelfe ſo merry ferde,
Whan I her bliſfull ſonges herde,

That for an hundred pound would I,
If that the passage openly
Had be unto me free
That I couthe entren for to see
Thassemble (God keepe it fro care)
Of birdes, whiche therein ware,
That songen through hir merry throtes,
Daunces of love, and merry notes.

When I thus heard the foules sing,
I fell fast in a waymenting,
By which art, or by what engin,
I might come into that gardin,
But way I couthe finde none,
Into that gardin for to gone,
Ne nought wist I if that there were
Either hole or place where,
By which I might have entre,
Ne there was none to teache me,
For I was all alone ywis,
For woe and anguishe of this,
Till at last bethought I me,
That by no way ne might it be,
That there nas ladder ne way to pace,
Or hole, into so faire a place.
Tho gan I go a full great paas,
Environ, even in compas,
The closing of the square wall,
Till that I found a wicket small
So shette, that I ne might in gone,
And other entre was there none.

Upon this doore I gan to smite
That was so fetis, and so lite,
For other waye coud I not seke.
Full longe I shofe, and knocked eke,

And stode full long all herkening
If that I heard any wight comming :
Till that the doore of thilke entre
A maiden curteis opened me :
Her haire was as yellowe of hewe
As any bason scoured newe,
Her fleshe tender as is a chicke
With bente browes, smooth and slicke,
And by measure large were
The opening of her eyen clere :
Her nose of good proportion,
Her eyen graie, as is a faucon,
With sweete breath and well favoured,
Her face white and well coloured,
With little mouth, and round to sec ;
A clove chinne eke had she ;
Her necke was of good fashion
In length and greatnesse by reason,
Without bleine, scabbe, or roine ;
Fro Jerusalem unto Burgoine
Ther n'is a fairer necke ywis
To fele how smooth and soft it is.
Her throte also white of hewe,
As snowe on braunche snowed newe.
Of bodie full well wrought was she,
Men neden not in no countre
A fairer bodie for to seke :
And of fine orfrais had she eke
A chapelet, so semely on,
Ne wered never maide upon ;
And faire above that chapelet
A rose garlonde had she set ;
She had a gaie mirrour
And with a riche gold tressour,

Her head was tressed queintly
Her sleeves sewed fetously.
And for to keepe her hondes faire
Of gloves white she had a paire :
And she had on a coate of grene
Of cloth of Gaunt, withouten wene :
Well seemed by her apparaile
She was not wont to great travaile.
For whan shee kempt was fetously
And well araied and richly,
Than had she done all her iournee,
For merrye and well begon was she.

She led a lustie life in May,
She had no thought, by night ne day
Of nothing, but if it were onely
To graithe her well and uncouthly.

Whan that this dore had opened me
This maiden, seemely for to see,
I thonked her as I best might,
And asked her how that she hight :
And what she was, I asked eke,
And she to me was nought unmeke
Ne of her answeere daungerous,
But faire answerde, and sayed thus :

“ Lo sir, my name is Idlenesse
So clepe men me, more and lesse :
Full mightie and full rich am I,
And that of one thinge namely,
For I entende to nothing
But to my joye, and my pleying,
And for to kembe and tresse me :
Acquainted am I and prive
With Mirthe, lord of this gardine,
That fro the londe of Alexandrine

Made the trees hither be fet,
That in this gardin been yset :
And when the trees woxen on hight,
This wall that stant here in thy sight,
Did Mirthe enclosen all about,
And these images all without
He did hem both entayle and paint,
That neither been jolife ne queint,
But they been full of sorowe and wo,
As thou hast scene a while ago.

“ AND oft time him to solace
Sir Mirthe commeth into this place,
And eke with him commeth his meinie,
That liven in lust and jolitie :
And now is Mirthe therein, to here
The birdes how they singen clere,
The mavis and the nightingale,
And other jolly birdes smale :
And thus he walketh to solace
Him and his folke, for sweeter place
To playen in, he may not finde,
Although he sought one in tyl Inde.
The alther fairest folke to see
That in this worlde may found bee
Hath Mirthe with him in his rout,
That followen him alwaies about.”

When Idlennesse had told all this,
And I had herkened well ywis,
Then saied I to dame Idlennesse,
“ Now also wisely God me blesse,
Sith Mirthe, that is so faire and fre,
Is in this yerd with his meinie,
Fro thilke assemble, if I may,

Shall no man werne me to day,
That I this night ne mote it see,
For well wene I there with him bee
A faire and jolie companie
Fulfilled of all courtesie :”
And forth with out wordes mo
In at the wicket went I tho,
That Idlenesse had opened mee,
Into that garden faire to see.

And whan I was in ywis,
Mine herte was full glad of this.
For well wened I full sikerly
Have been in Paradice earthly,
So faire it was, that trusteth well,
It seemed a place esprituell.
For certes at my devise,
There is no place in Paradice,
So good in for to dwell or be,
As in that garden thoughte me.
For there was many a bird singing,
Throughout the yerde all thringing,
In many places were nightingales,
Alpes, finches, and wodwales,
That in hir swete song delighten
In thilke places as they habiten.

There mighte men see many flockes
Of turtles and laverockes,
Chelaundres fele saw I there,
That very nigh forsongen were.
And thrustles, terins, and mavise,
That songen for to win hem prise,
And eke to surmount in hir song
That other birdes hem emong
By note made faire servise :

These birdes, that I you devise,
They song her song as faire and well,
As angels doon espirituell,
And trusteth me, when I hem herde,
Full lustie and well I ferde :
For never yet such melodie
Was heard of man that mighte die.
Such swete song was hem emong,
That me thought it no birdes song,
But it was wonder like to bee
Song of mermaidens of the see,
That for hir singen is so clere :
Though we mermaidens clepe hem here
In English, as is our usaunce,
Men clepe hem sereins in Fraunce.

ENTENTIVE weren for to sing
These birdes, that not unkonning
Were of hir craft, and à prentise,
But of songe subtill and wise :
And certes, whan I heard hir song,
And sawe the grene place among,
In heart I wext so wonder gay,
That I was never, ere that day,
So jolife, nor so well bigo,
Ne merry in heart, as I was tho :
And than wist I, and saw full well,
That Idlenesse me served well,
That me put in such jolite,
Her frend well ought I for to be,
Sith she the dore of that gardin
Had opened, and me let in.
From henceforth, how that I wrought
I shall you tell,—as me thought :

First whereof Mirthe served there,
And eke what folke there with him were,
Without fable I woll discrive,
And that garden eke as blive ;
I woll you tellen after this
The faire fashion all ywis,
That well wrought was for the nones ;
I may not tell you all atones,
But as I may and can, I shall
By order tellen you it all.

Full faire service, and eke full swete
These birdes maden as they sete :
Laies of love, ful well souning
They songen in hir jargonig,
Some high, and some eke lowe songe
Upon the braunches greene yspronge :
The sweetnesse of hir melodie
Made all mine heart in revelrie.

And whan that I heard I trowe
These birdes singing on a rowe,
Then might I not withholde mee
That I ne went in for to see
Sir Mirthe, for my desiring
Was him to seene over all thing,
His countenaunce and his manere :
That sighte was to me full dere.

Two went I forth on my right hond
Downe by a litel path I fond
Of mintes full, and fennell greene,
As faste by withouten wene
Sir Mirthe I found, and right anone
Unto sir Mirthe gan I gone,
There as he was him to solace,

And with him in that lustie place,
So faire folke and so fresh had he,
That when I saw, I wondred me
Fro whence suche folke might come,
So faire they weren all and some :
For they weren like, as to my sight,
To angels, that ben fethered bright.

These folke, of which I tell you so,
Upon a karole wenten tho :
A ladie karoled hem, that hight
GLADNESSE, bli-full, and light,
Well could she sing and lustely
None halfe so well and seemely :
And couthe make in song such refraining,
It sate her wonder well to sing.
Her voice full clere was and full swete.
She was not rude ne unmete,
But couthe ynough for such doing
As longeth unto karolling :
For she was wont in every place
To singen first, folke to solace,
For singing most she gave her to,
No craft had she so lefe to do.

Thou mightest thou karoles seene,
And folke daunce and merry beene,
And made many a faire tournyng
Upon the greene grasse springing.

There mightest thou see these flutours,
Minstrales, and eke jogelours,
That well to singe did hir paine :
Some song songes of Lorraine,
For in Lorraine hir notes be
Full sweeter than in this countre.

There was many a timbestere,
And sailours, that I dare well swere
Couthe hir craft full perfitylly :
The timbres up full subtelly
They cast, and hent full oft
Upon a finger faire and soft,
That they failed never mo.
Full fetis damoseles two,
Right yong, and full of semelyhede
In kirtles, and none other wede,
And faire tressed every tresse
Had Mirthe doen for his noblesse
Amid the carole for to daunce,
But hereof lieth no remembraunce,
How that they daunced queintly :
That one would come all prively
Ayen that other, and when they were
Togither almost, they threw yfere
Hir mouthes so, that through hir play
It seemed as they kist alway :
To dauncen well couthe they the gise.
What should I more to you devise ?
Ne bode I never thence go,
Whiles that I saw hem daunce so.
Upon the caroll wonder fast,
I gan beholde, till at last
A ladie gan me for to espie,
And she was cleped COURTESIE,
The worshipfull, the debonaire,
I pray to God ever fall her faire :
Full courtesly she called me,
“ What doe ye there, beau sire ? ” (quod she)
“ Come, and if it like you
To dauncen, daunceth with us now : ”

And I without tarrying
Went into the carolling,
I was abashed never a dele,
But it to me liked right wele,
That Courtesie me cleped so,
And bade me on the daunce go.
For if I had durst, certaine
I would have carolled right faine
As man that was to daunce right blithe :
Than gan I looken oft sithe
The shape, the bodies, and the cheres,
The countenaunce and the maneres
Of all the folke that daunced there,
And I shall tellen what they were.

Full faire was MIRTHE, full long and high,
A fairer man I never sigh :
As round as apple was his face,
Full roddie and white in every place :
Fetis he was and well besey,
With meetly mouth and eyen gray,
His nose by measure wrought full right,
Crispe was his haire, and eke full bright :
His shoulderes of a large brede,
And smallish in the girdlesteade :
He seemed like a purtreiture,
So noble he was of his stature,
So faire, so jolly, and so fetise,
With limmes wrought at point devise
Deliver, smert, and of great might :
Ne saw thou never man so light.
Of berd unneth had he nothing,
For it was in the firste spring,
Full yong he was, and merry of thought
And in samette, with birdes wrought,

And with gold beaten full fetously,
His bodie was clad full richely :
Wrought was his robe in straunge gise,
And all to slittered for queintise
In many a place, low and hie,
And shode he was with great maistrie,
With shoone decoped, and with lace,
By druerie, and by solace,
His lefe a rosen chapelet
Had made, and on his head it set.

And wete ye who was his lefe,
Dame GLADNESSE there was him so lefe,
That singeth so well with glad courage,
That from she was twelve yeare of age,
She of her love graunt him made :
Sir Mirthe her by the finger hade
Dauncing, and she him also,
Great love was atwixt hem two :
Both were they faire and bright of hew,
She semed like a rose new
Of colours, and her flesh so tender,
That with a brere small and tender,
Men might it cleve, I dare well say :
Her forehead frounceles all play,
Bent were her browes two,
Her eyen gray, and glad also,
That laughden aye in her semblaunt,
First or the mouth by covenant.
I wot not what of her nose I shall discribe,
So faire hath no woman alive :
Her haire was yellow, and clere shining,
I wote no lady so liking.

Of orfraies fresh was her garland,
I whiche scene have a thousand

Saw never ywis no garland yet,
So well wrought of silke as it.
And in an over gilt samite
Clad she was, by great delite,
Of whiche her lefe a robe werde,
The merrier she in her heart ferde.

And next her went, on her other side,
THE GOD OF LOVE, that can divide
Love, and as him liketh it be,
But he can chorles daunten, he,
And many folkes pride fallen,
And he can well these lordes thrallen,
And ladies put at low degree
When he may hem too proude see.

This god of love of his fashion
Was like no knave, ne quistron :
His beautie greatly was to prise,
But of his robe to devise
I dreade encombred for to be,
For not yclad in silke was he,
But all in floures and flourettes,
Ypainted all with amorettes,
And with losenges and scochons,
With birdes, liberdes, and lions,
And other beastes wrought full wele ;
His garment was every dele
Ypurtraied and ywrought with flours,
By divers medeling of colours :
Floures ther were of many gise
Yset by compasse in a sise,
There lacked no floure to my dome,
Ne not so much as floure of brome,
Ne violet, ne eke pervinke,
Ne floure none, that men can on thinke :

And many a rose lefe full long
Was entermedled there emong :
And also on his head was set
Of roses redde a chapelet.

But nightingales a full great rout
That flien over his head about,
The leaves felden as they flien,
And he was all with birdes wrien,
With popinjay, with nightingale,
With chelaundre, and with wodewale,
With finch, with larke, and with archangell,
He seemed as he were an angell,
That down were comen fro Heaven clere.

Love had with him a bachelere,
That he made alwayes with him be,
SWETE LOOKING cleped was he :
This batcheler stode beholding
The daunce, and in his honde holding
Turke bowes too, full well devised had hee,
That one of hem was of a tree
That beareth a fruiet of savour wicke,
Full crooked was that foule sticke,
And knottie here and there also,
And blacke as berrie, or any slo.

That other bow was of a plant
Without wemme, I dare warrant,
Full even and by proportion,
Trectes and long, of full good fashion,
And it was painted well and thwitten,
And over all diapred and written
With ladies and with bacheleres,
Full lightsome and glad of cheres :
These bowes two held Sweet Looking,
That seemed like no gadling :

And ten brode arrowes held he there,
Of which five in his honde were,
But they were shaven well and dight,
Nocked and feathered aright :
And all they were with golde begon,
And stronge pointed everichon,
And sharpe for to kervon wele,
But yron was there none ne stele :
For all was golde, men might see,
Out-take the feathers and the tree.

THE swiftest of these arrowes five
Out of a bowe for to drive,
And beste feathered for to flie,
And fairest eke, was cleped Beautie :

That other arrow that hurteth lesse,
Was cleped (as I trow) Simplesse :

The thirde cleped was Fraunchise,
That feathered was in noble wise
With valour and with courtesie ?

The fourth was clepen Companie,
That heavie for to shooten is,
But who so shooteth right ywis,
May therewith doen great harme and wo :

The fift of these, and last also,
Faire Semblaunt men that arrow call,
The leste greevous of hem all,
Yet can it make a full great wound,
But he may hope his sores sound
That hurt is with that arrowe ywis,
His wo the bette bestowed is :
For he may sooner have gladnesse,
His langour ought to be the lesse.

FIVE arrowes were of other gise,

That been full foule to devise :
For shaft and end, sooth for to tell,
Were al so blacke as fiend in Hell.

The first of hem is called Pride,
That other arrow next him beside,
It was cleped Villanie,
That arrow was with felonie
Envenimed, and with spitous blame :
The third of hem was cleped Shame.
The fourth, Wanhope cleped is,
The fift, the Newe Thought ywis.

These arrowes that I speake of here,
Were all five on one mannere,
And all were they resemblable ;
To hem was well fitting and able,
The foule crooked bowe hidous,
That knottie was, and all roinous ;
That bowe seemed well to shete
The arrowes five, that been unmete
And contrary to that other five :
But though I tell not as blive
Of hir power, ne of hir might,
Hereafter shall I tellen right
The sooth, and eke signifiunce,
As ferre as I have remembraunce :
All shall be saied I undertake,
Ere of this booke an end I make.

Now come I to my tale againe :
But alderfirst, I woll you saine
The fashion and the countenaunces
Of all the folke that on the daunce is.
The god of love jolife and light,
Led on his honde a ladie bright,
Of high prise, and of great degre,

This ladie called was BEAUTE,
And an arrow, of which I told,
Full well thewed was she hold :
Ne she was derke ne browne, but bright,
And cleare as the moone light :
Againe whom all the starres semen
But small candles, as we demen :
Her flesh was tender as dewe of floure,
Her cheare was simple as bird in boure,
As white as lilly or rose in rise :
Her face gentill and tretise :
Fetis she was, and small to see,
No wintred browes had shee,
Ne popped haire, for it needed nought
To winder her, or to paint her ought :
Her tresses yellow, and long straughten,
Unto her heeles downe they raughten :
Her nose, her mouth, and eye and cheke
Well wrought, and all the remnaunt eke.
A full gret savour and a swote ;
Me thoughte in mine herte rote,
As helpe me God, when I remember,
Of the fashion of every member,
In world is none so faire a wight :
For yong she was, and hewed bright
Sore pleasant, and fetis with all,
Gent, and in her middle small.

Beside Beaute yede RICHESSE,
An high ladie of great noblesse,
And great of price in every place :
But who so durst to her trespase
Or till her folke, in werke or dede,
He were full hardie out of drede :
For both she helpe and hinder may,

And that is not of yesterday
That riche folke have full great might
To helpe, and eke to greve a wight.

The best and greatest of valour
Didden Richesse full great honour,
And busie weren her to serve,
For that they would her love deserve ;
They cleped her ladie, gret and small,
This wide world her dredeth all :
This world is all in her daungere,
Her court hath many a losengere,
And many a traitour envious,
That ben full busie and curious
For to dispraise, and to blame
That best deserven love and name,
To forne the folke hem to begilen,
These losengeours hem preise and smilen.

And thus the world with word annointen,
But afterward they prill and pointen
The folke, right to the bare bone,
Behinde hir backe when they ben gone,
And foule abaten folkes prise.
Full many a worthy man and wise
Han hindred, and ydon to die
These losengeours with hir flatterie,
And maketh folke full straunge be,
There as hem ought ben prive :
Well evill mote they thrive and thee,
And evill arived mote they bee
These losengeours full of envie.
No good man loveth hir companie.

Richesse a robe of purple on had,
Ne trow not that I lie or mad :
For in this world is none it liche,

Ne by a thousand deale so riche,
Ne none so faire, for it full wele,
With orfreis laied was every dele,
And purtraid in the ribanings
Of dukes stories, and of kings,
And with a bend of gold tassiled,
And knopes fine of gold amiled:
About her necke of gentle entayle
Was shet the riche chevesaile,
In which there was full great plente
Of stones clere, and faire to se.

Richesse a girdle had upon,
The bokell of it was of ston,
Of vertue great, and mokell of might:
For who so bare the stone so bright,
Of venim durst him nothing doubt
While he the stone had him about:
That stone was greatly for to love,
And till a riche mannes behove
Worth all the gold in Rome and Frise:
The mourdant wrought in noble gise
Was of a stone full precious,
That was so fine and vertuous,
That whole a man it couth make
Of palsie, and of tothe ake,
And yet the stone had such a grace,
That he was seker in every place
All thilke day not blind to beene,
That fasting might that stone seene:
The barres were of gold full fine,
Upon a tissue of sattine
Full heavie, great, and nothing light,
In everiche was a besaunt wight.

Upon the tresses of richesse

Was set a circle of noblesse
Of brende golde, that full light shone,
So faire trow I was never none :
But he were cunning for the nones,
That could devise all the stones
That in that circle shewen clere,
It is a wonder thing to here :
For no man could preise or gesse
Of hem the value or richesse :
Rubies there were, saphirs, ragounces,
And emeraudes, more than two unces.
But all before full subtilly
A fine carbuncle set saw I,
The stone so cleare was and so bright,
That all so soone as it was night,
Menne might seene to go for nede
A mile or two, in length and brede.
Such light ysprang out of the stone,
That Richesse wonder bright yshone
Bothe her hedde, and all her face,
And eke about her all the place.

Dame Richesse on her hond gan lede
A yong man full of semelyhede,
That she best loved of any thing,
His lust was much in housholding :
In clothing was he full fetise,
And loved well to have hors of prise,
He wend to have reprovéd be
Of theft or murder, if that he
Had in his stable an hacknay,
And therefore he desired aye
To been acquainted with Richesse,
For all his purpose, as I gesse,
Was for to maken great dispence,

Withouten warning or defence:
And Richesse might it well sustaine,
And her dispences wele maintaine,
And him alway such plentie send
Of gold and silver for to spend
Withouten lacking or daungere,
As it were pourde in a garnere.

And after on the daunce went
LARGESSE, that set all her entent
For to ben honorable and free,
Of Alexanders kinne was shee:
Her moste joie was ywis,
When that she yafe, and saied, have this.
Not avarice the foule caitife
Was halfe to gripe so ententife
As Largesse is, to yeve and spend,
And God alway ynowe her send,
So that the more she yave away,
The more ywis she had alway.
Great loos hath Largesse, and great prise,
For both wise folke and unwise
Were wholly to her bandon brought,
So well with yestes hath she wrought.

And if she had an enemy,
I trowe that she couth craftely
Make him full soone her friend to be,
So large of yestes, and wise was she,
Therefore she stood in love and grace
Of rich and poore in every place.

A full great foole he is ywis,
That both rich and poore, and niggard is.
A lord may have no manner vice,
That greeveth more than avarice.
For niggard never with strength of hand

May win him great lordship or land :
For friendes all too few hath he
To doen his will performed be :
And who so woll have friendes here,
He may not hold his treasure dere.
For by ensample tell I this,
Right as an adamant ywis
Can drawen to him subtelly
The yron that is laied thereby,
So draweth folkes hearts ywis
Silver and gold that yeven is.

Largesse had on a robe fresh
Of riche purple sarlinish :
Well formed was her face and clere,
And opened had she her colere,
For she right there had in present
Unto a lady made present
Of a gold broche, full well wrought,
And certes it mis-sate her nought :
For through her smocke wrought with silke,
The flesh was seene as white as milke :
Largesse, that worthy was and wise,
Held by the hond a knight of prise,
Was sibbe to Arthour of Breteigne,
And that was he that bare the ensceigne
Of worship, and the gosfaucoun :
And yet he is of such renoun,
That menne of him say faire things
Before barons, earles, and kings.

This knight was commen all newly
Fro tourneying faste by,
There had he done great chivalrie
Through his vertue and his maistric,
And for the love of his lemman

He cast downe many a doughty man.

And next him daunced dame Fraunchise,
Arrayed in full noble gise :

She nas not broune ne dunne of hew,

But white as snow yfallen new :

Her nose was wrought at point devise,

For it was gentill and tretise,

With eyen glad, and browes bent,

Her haire downe to her heles went,

And she was simple as dove on tree,

Full debonaire of hert was shee.

She durste neither say ne do,

But that, that her longeth to :

And if a man were in distresse,

And for her love in heavynesse,

Her herte would have full great pitee

She was so amiable and free :

For were a manne for her bestad,

She woulde ben right sore adrad,

That she did overgreat outrage,

But she him hope his harme t'aswage,

Her thought it all a villany,

And she had on a suckeny,

That not of hempe herdes was,

So faire was none in all Arras,

Lord, it was riddled fetisly,

There nas not a point truely

That it nas in his right assise,

Full well yclothed was Fraunchise,

For there n'is no cloth sitteth bette

On damosell, than doth rokette :

A woman well more fetise is

In rokette, than in cote ywis,

The white rokette riddeled faire,

Betokeneth, that full debonaire
And swete was she that it bere.

By her daunced a bachelere,
I cannot tellen what he hight,
But faire he was, and of good height,
All had he ben, I say no more,
The lordes sonne of Windesore.

And next that daunced COURTESIE,
That preised was of low and hie,
For neither proud ne foole was she :
She for to daunce called me,
I praie God give her good grace,
For when I came first into the place,
She nas not nice, ne outrageous,
But wise and ware, and vertuous,
Of faire speech, and faire answer,
Was never wight missaid of her :
She bare no rancour to no wight,
Clere browne she was, and thereto bright
Of face and body avenaunt
I wote no lady so pleasaunt,
She weren worthy for to bene
An emperesse or crowned quene.

And by her went a knight dauncing
That worthy was and well speaking,
And full well coud he done honour :
The knight was faire and stiffe in stour,
And in armure a seemely man,
And well beloved of his lemman.

Faire Idlenesse then saw I,
That alway was me faste by,
Of her have I withouten faile
Told you the shape and apparaile :
For (as I said) Lo, that was she

That did to me so great bounte.
She the gate of that gardin
Undid, and let me passen in,
And after daunced as I gesse.

And she fulfilled of lustinesse,
That n'as not yet twelve yeare of age,
With herte wild, and thought volage.
Nice she was, but she ne ment
None harme ne sleight in her entent,
But onely lust and jolite.
For yonge folke, well weten ye,
Have little thought but on hir play.
Her lemman was beside alway,
In such a gise, that he her kist
At all times that him list,
That all the daunce might it see,
They make no force of privetee :
For who so spake of hem evill or wele,
They were ashamed never adele,
But men might seene hem kisse there,
As it two yonge doves were,
For yonge was thilke bachelere,
Of beauty wot I non his perc,
And he was right of such an age,
As youth his lefe, and such courage.

The lusty folke that daunced there,
And also other that with hem were
That weren all of hir meinee
Full hende folke, wise, and free,
And folke of faire port truly,
There were all comenly.

Whan I had seene the countenaunces
Of hem that ladden thus these daunces,
Than had I will to go and see

The garden that so liked mee,
And loken on these faire laureres,
Or pine trees, cedres, and ormeres,
The daunces than al ended were,
For many of hem that daunced there,
Were with her loves went away
Under the trees to have her play.

A LORD, they lived lustely,
A great foole were he sikerly,
That n'old his thankes such life lede :
For this dare I saine out of drede,
That who so mighte so well fare,
For better life durst him not care,
For there n'is so good paradise,
As to have a love at his devise :
Out of that place went I tho,
And in that garden gan I go,
Playing along full merely.
The god of love full hastely
Unto him SWEET-LOOKING clept,
No lenger would he that she kept
His bowe of gold, that shone so bright.
He had him bent anon right,
And he full soone set an end,
And at a braide he gan it bend,
And tooke him of his arrowes five,
Full sharpe and ready for to drive.

Now God that sitteth in majeste
Fro deadly woundes he keepe me,
If so be that he had me shete,
For if I with his arrow mete,
It had me greeved sore ywis,
But I, that nothing wist of this,

Went up and downe full many a way,
And he me followed fast alway,
But no where would I reste me,
Till I had in all the garden be.

THE garden was by measuring
Right even and square in compassing,
It as long was as it was large,
Of fruit had every tree his charge,
But it were any hidous tree
Of whiche there were two or three.

There were, and that wote I full wele,
Of pomgranettes a full great dele,
That is a fruit full well to like,
Namely to folke when they ben sike :
And trees there were great foison,
That baren nuts in hir season,
Such as menne nutmegges call,
That swote of savour been withall,
And almandres great plentee,
Figges, and many a date tree
There weren, if menne had nede,
Through the gardin in length and brede.

There was eke wexing many a spice,
As clowe, gilofre, and licorice,
Gingere, and grein de Paris,
Canell, and setewale of pris,
And many a spice delitable,
To eaten when men rise fro table.

And many homely trees there were,
That peaches, coines, and apples bere,
Medlers, plummes, peeres, chesteinis,
Cherise, of whiche many one faine is,
Notes, aleis, and bolas,

That for to seene it was solas,
 With many high lances and pikes,
 Was ranged thow all that garden
 With cipres, and with oliveris,
 Of which that right so plenty here is.

There were James great and strong,
 Maples, ash, oke, ashes, planes long,
 Fine aw, poplar, and lindes there,
 And other trees full many a pere.

What should I tell you more of it,
 There were so many trees yet,
 That I should all remembred bee,
 Ere I had reckoned every tree.

These trees were set that I descrye,
 One from another in assise
 Five fadome or sixe, I trowe so,
 But they were high and great also,
 And for to keepe out well the Sunne,
 The croppes were so thicke ygreen,
 And every branch in other knots,
 And full of greene leaves sitte,
 That Sunne might there none descend,
 Least the tender grasses shoulde
 There might moune does and sees ysee,
 And of squirrels full great playsee,
 From bough to bough alway leping,
 Connies there were also playing,
 That comen out of hir clapers
 Of sundry colours and maners,
 And maden many a tourneying
 Upon the freshe grasse springing.

In places saw I welles there,
 In whiche there no frogges were,
 And faire in shad low was every well.

But I ne can the number tell
Of stremis small, that by devise
Mirthe had done come through condise,
Of which the water in renning
Gan make a noise full liking.

About the brinkes of these wels,
And by the streames over all els
Sprang up the grasse, as thicke yset
And softe as any velvet.
On which men might his lemman ley,
As on a featherbed to pley,
For the earth was full soft and swete :
Through moisture of the well wete
Sprong up the sote grene gras,
As faire, as thicke, as mister was.
But much amended it the place,
That thearth was of such a grace
That it of floures hath plente,
That both in summer and winter be.

There sprang the violet all new,
And freshe pervinke rich of hew,
And floures yellow, white, and rede,
Such plenty grew there never in mede :
Full gay was all the ground and queint,
And poudred, as men had it peint,
With many a fresh and sundry flour,
That casten up full good savour.

I woll nat long hold you in fable
(Of all this garden delectable,
I mote my tongue stinten nede,
For I ne may withouten drede
Naught tellen you the beautie all,
Ne halfe the bountie therewithall.

I went on right honde and on left

About the place, it was not left
Till I had all the garden beene
In the esters that men might seene.

And thus while I went in my playe,
The god of love me followed aye.
Right as an hunter can abide
The beast, till he seeth his tide
To shooten at goodnesse to the deere,
Whan that him needeth go no neere.

And so befell, I rested mee
Besides a well under a tree,
Which tree in Fraunce men call a pine,
But sith the time of king Pepine
Ne grew there tree in mannes sight
So faire, ne so well woxe in hight,
In all that yard so high was none.
And springing in a marble stone
Had nature set, the sooth to tell,
Under that pine tree a well,
And on the border all without
Was written on the stone about
Letters small, that saiden thus,
Here starfe the faire Narcissus.

Narcissus was a bachelere,
That Love had caught in his daungere,
And in his nette gan him so straine,
And did him so to weepe and plaine,
That need him must his life forgo :
For a faire lady, that hight Echo,
Him loved over any creature,
And gan for him such paine endure,
That on a time she him tolde,
That if he her loven nolde,
That her beloved needes die,

There lay none other remedie.

But nathelesse, for his beaute
So fierce and daungerous was he,
That he nolde graunten her asking,
For weeping, ne for faire praying.

And when she heard him werne her so,
She had in herte so grete wo,
And tooke it in so grete despite,
That she without more respite
Was dead anon : but ere she deide,
Ful pitously to God she preide,
That proude hearted Narcissus,
That was in love so daungerous,
Might on a day ben hampered so
For love, and ben so hote for wo,
That never he might to joy attaine ;
Then should he fele in very vaine
What sorrow true lovers maken,
That ben so villainously forsaken.

THIS prayer was but reasonable,
Therefore God held it firme and stable :
For Narcissus shortly to tell,
By aventure came to that well
To rest him in the shadding
A day, when he came from hunting.

This Narcissus had suffred paines
For renning all day in the plaines,
And was for thurst in great distresse
Of herte, and of his wearinesse,
That had his breath almost benomen.
Whan he was to that well ycomen,
That shaddowed was with branches grene.
He thought of thilke water shene

To drinke and fresh him wele withall,
And downe on knees he gan to fall,
And forth his necke and head outstraught
To drinke of that well a draught :
And in the water anon was sene
His nose, his mouth, his eyen shene,
And he thereof was all abashed,
His owne shaddow had him betrashed,
For well wend he the forme see
Of a childe of great beautee,
Well couth Love him wreke tho
Of daungere and of pride also
That Narcissus sometime him bere,
He quite him well his guerdon there,
For he mused so in the well,
That shortely the sooth to tell,
He loved his owne shaddow so,
That at last he starfe for wo :
For when he saw that he his will
Might in no manner way fulfill,
And that he was so faste caught
That he him couthe comfort naught,
He lost his wit right in that place
And died within a little space,
And thus his warison he tooke
For the lady that he forsoke.

Ladies I praye ensample taketh,
Ye that ayenst your love mistaketh :
For if of hir death be you to wite,
God can full well your wile quite.

When that this letter of which I tell,
Had taught me that it was the well
Of Narcissus in his beaute,
I gan anon withdrawe me,

When it fell in my remembraunce,
That him betide such mischaunce :
But at the laste than thought I,
That scatheless, full sikerly,
I might unto the welle go,
Whereof shull I abashen so.
Unto the welle then went I mee,
And downe I louted for to see
The clere water in the stone,
And eke the gravell, which that shone
Downe in the bottome, as silver fine :
For of the well, this is the fine,
In world is none so clere of hew,
The water is ever fresh and new
That welmeth up with waves bright
The mountenaunce of two finger hight :
About it is grasse springing,
For moist so thicke and well liking,
That it ne may in winter die,
No more than may the see be drie.

Downe at the bottome set saw I
Two christal stones craftely
In thilke fresh and faire well :
But o thing soothly dare I tell,
That ye woll hold a great mervaile
Whan it is told withouten faile :
For whan the Sunne clere in sight
Cast in that well his beames bright,
And that the heat descended is,
Than taketh the christall stone ywis,
Againe the Sunne an hundred hewis,
Blew, yellow, and red, that fresh and new is :
Yet hath the mervailous christall

Such strength, that the place over all,
Both foule and tree, and leaves greene,
And all the yerd in it is seene :
And for to done you to understand,
To make ensample woll I fond :
Right as a mirrour openly
Sheweth all thing that stondeth thereby,
As well the colour as the figure,
Withouten any coverture :
Right so the christall stone shining,
Withouten any deceiving,
The entrees of the yerd accuseth
To him that in the water museth :
For ever in which halfe ye bee,
Ye may well halfe the garden see :
And if he turne, he may right wele
Seene the remenaunt every dele :
For there is none so little thing
So hid ne closed with shyttng,
That it ne is seene, as though it were
Painted in the chrystall there.
This is the mirrour perillus,
In which the proude Narcissus
Sey all his faire face bright,
That made him sith to lie upright :
For who so looke in that mirrour,
There may nothing ben his succour
That he ne shall there see something
That shall him lede into laughing :
Full many a worthy man hath it
Yblent, for folke of greatest wit
Ben soone caught here and waited,
Withouten respite ben they baited :
Here comneth to folke of new rage,

Here chaungeth many wight courage,
Here lithe no rede ne wit thereto,
For Venus sonne, dan Cupido,
Hath sowen there of love the sede,
That helpe ne lithe there none, ne rede,
So cercleth it the well about :
His ginnes hath he set without
Right for to catch in his panthers
These damosels and bachelers.
Love will none other birde catch,
Though he set either nette or latch :
And for the seed that here was sowen,
This well is cleped, as well is knowen,
The Well of Love, of very right,
Of which there hath full many wight
Spoken in bookes diversly :
But they shull never so verily
Description of the well here,
Ne eke the sooth of this matere,
As ye shull, when I have undo
The craft that her belongeth to.

ALWAY me liked for to dwell,
To scene the christall in the well,
That shewed me full openly
A thousand thinges faste by,
But I may say in sorry houre
Stode I to looken or to poure :
For sithen I sore siked,
That mirrour hath me now entriked :
But had I first knowen in my wit
The vertue and strengthes of it,
I n'old not have mused there,
Me had bette ben eleswhere,

For in the snare I fell anone,
That had bitreshed many one.

In thilke mirrour saw I tho,
Among a thousand things mo,
A roser charged full of rosis,
That with an hedge about enclosis,
Tho had I suche luste and envie,
That for Paris ne for Pavie,
N'old I have left to gone and see,
There greatest heape of roses bee.
Whan I was with that rage hent,
That caught hath many a man and shent,
Toward the roser gan I go,
And whan I was not ferre therefro,
The savour of the roses swote
Me smote right to the heart rote,
As I had all enbaumed be :
And if I ne had endoutet me
To have ben hated or assailed,
My thanks woll I not have failed
To pull a rose of all that rout
To beare in mine honde about,
And smellen to it where I went,
But ever I drede me to repent,
And least it greved or forthought
The lord that thilke gardin wrought.
Of roses there were great wone,
So faire were never in Rone :
Of knoppes close, some saw I there,
And some well better woxen were,
And some there been of other moison,
That drowe nigh to hir season,
And sped hem faste for to spred,
I love well such roses red :

For brode roses, and open also,
Ben passed in a day or two,
But knoppes will fresh bee
Two dayes at least, or els three.
The knoppes greatly liked mee,
For fairer may there no man see :
Who so might have one of all,
It ought him been full lefe withall :
Might I garlonde of hem getten,
For no richesse I would it letten.

Amongs the knoppes I chese one
So faire, that of the remnaunt none
Ne preise I halfe so well as it,
Whan I avise in my wit,
For it so well was enlumined
With colour red, as well fined
As nature couth it make faire,
And it hath leaves well foure paire,
That Kinde hath set through his knowing
About the red roses springing,
The stalke was as rishe right,
And thereon stood the knoppe upright,
That it ne bowed upon no side,
The swote smell sprung so wide,
That it died all the place about.
Whan I had smelled the savour swote,
No will had I fro thence yet go,
But somedele nere it went I tho
To take it, but mine hond for drede
Ne durst I to the rose bede,
For thistles sharpe of many manners,
Nettles, thornes, and hooked briers,
For muche they distourbled me,
For sore I drad to harmed be.

THE god of love, with bowe bent,
That all day set had his talent
To pursue and to spien mee,
Was standing by a figge tree,
And when he sawe how that I
Had chosen so ententifely
The bothum more unto my pey,
Than any other that I sey :
He tooke an arrow full sharply whet,
And in his bowe when it was set,
He streight up to his eare drough
The strong bowe, that was so tough,
And shot at me so wonder smert,
That through mine eye unto mine hert
The takell smote, and deepe it went :
And therewithall such cold me hent,
That under clothes warme and soft,
Sithen that day I have chivered oft.

When I was hurte thus in stound,
I fell down plat unto the ground,
Mine herte failed and fainted aye,
And long time in swoune I lay :
But when I came out of swouning,
And had my wit, and my feeling.
I was all mate, and wend full wele
Of blood, have lorne a full great dele,
But certes the arrow that in me stood,
Of me ne drew no drop of blood,
For why I found my wounds all drey.

Than tooke I with mine hondes twey
The arrow, and full fast it out plight,
And in the pulling sore I sight,
So at the last the shaft of tree
I drough out, with the feathers three,

But yet the hooked head ywis,
The whiche Beauty called is,
Gan so deepe in mine herte pace,
That I it might not arace,
But in mine herte still it stood,
All bled I not a drop of blood :
I was both anguishous and trouble,
For the perill that I saw double,
I nist what to say or do,
Ne get a leach my wounds to,
For neither through grasse ne rote,
Ne had I helpe of hope ne bote.
But to the bothum evermo
Mine herte drew, for all my wo,
My thought was in none other thing,
For had it been in my keeping,
It would have brought my life againe,
For certes evenly, I dare well saine,
The sight only, and the savour,
Alegged much of my langour.

Than gan I for to drawe mee
Toward the bothum faire to see,
And Love had gette him in his throwe
Another arrowe into his bowe,
And for to shote gan him dresse,
The arrowes name was Simplessc,
And when that love gan nigh me nere,
He drowe it up withouten were,
And shot at me with all his might,
So that this arrow anon right
Throughout eigh as it was found,
Into mine herte hath made a wound.
Than I anon did all my craft
For to drawen out the shaft,

And therewithall I sighed eft,
But in mine herte the head was left,
Which aye increased my desire;
Unto the bothum drow I nere,
And evermo that me was wo
The more desire had I to go
Unto the roser, where that grew
The fresh bothum so bright of hew,
Better me were to have letten be,
But it behoved nede me
To doen right as mine herte bad:
For ever the body must be lad
After the herte, in wele and wo,
Of force together they must go.
But never this archer would fine
To shote at me with all his pine,
And for to make me to him mete.

The third arrow he gan to shete,
Whan best his time he might espie,
The which was named Courtesie,
Into mine herte he did avale,
A swoone I fell, both dead and pale,
Long time I lay, and stirred nought,
Till I abraied out of my thought.
And faste than I avised mee
To drawe out the shaft of tree,
But ever the head was left behind
For ought I couthe pull or wind,
So sore it sticked when I was hit,
That by no craft I might it flit,
But anguishous and full of thought,
I felt such wo, my wound aye wrought,
That summoned me alway to go
Toward the rose, that pleased me so,

But I ne durst in no manere
Because the archer was so nere.

For evermore gladly as I rede,
Brent child of fire hath much drede.
And certes yet for all my pein,
Though that I sigh, yet arrowes rein,
And ground quarells sharpe of stele,
Ne for no paine that I might fele,
Yet might I not my selfe withhold
The faire roser to behold,
For Love me yave such hardement
For to fulfill his commaundement,
Upon my feet I rose up than
Feeble, as a forwounded man :
And forth to gone my might I set,
And for the archer nold I let,
Toward the roser fast I drowe
But thornes sharpe, mo than ynowe
There were, and also thistles thicke,
And breres brimme for to pricke,
That I ne might get grace
The rough thornes for to pace
To seene the roses fresh of hew,
I must abide, though it me rew,
The hedge about so thicke was,
That closed the roses in compas.

But o thing liked me right welc,
I was so nigh, I might fele
Of the bothum the swote odour,
And also see the fresh colour,
And that right greatly liked mee,
That I so nere might it see,
Such joy anon thereof had I,
That I forgat my malady,

To seene I had such delite,
Of sorrow and anger I was all quite,
And of my wounds that I had thore,
For nothing liken me might more,
Than dwellen by the roser aye,
And thence never to passe awaye :
But whan a while I had be thare,
The god of love, which all to share
Mine heart with his arrowes kene,
Casteth him to yeve me woundes grene,
He shot at me full hastely
An arrow named Company,
The whiche takell is full able
To make these ladies merciablen,
Than I anone gan chaungen hew
For greevaunce of my wounde new,
That I againe fell in swouning,
And sighed sore in complaining.

Sore I complained that my sore
On me gan greven more and more,
I had none hope of allegiaunce,
So nigh I drow to disperaunce,
I rought of death, ne of life,
Whether that love would me drife,
If me a martir would he make,
I might his power not forsake :
And while for anger thus I woke,
The god of love an arrow toke,
Full sharpe it was and pugnaunt,
And it was called Faire Semblaunt,
The which in no wise would consent,
That any lover him repent
To serve his love with herte and all,
For any perill that may befall.

But thought his arrow was kene ground,
As any rasour that is found,
To cut and kerve at the point,
The god of love it had annoint
With a precious oyntment,
Somedele to yeve allegement
Upon the woundes that he hade
Through the body in my heart made,
To helpe hir sores, and to cure,
And that they may the bette endure :
But yet this arrow, without more,
Made in mine heart a large sore,
That in full greate paine I abode,
But aye the ointment went abroad
Throughout my woundes large and wide,
It sprede about in every side :
Through whose vertue and whose might,
Mine herte joyfull was and light.
I had ben dead and all to shent
But for the precious ointment :
The shaft I drow out of the arrow,
Roking for wo right wonder narrow,
But the head, which made me smart,
Left behinde in mine heart
With other fower, I dare well say,
That never woll be take away,
But the ointment halpe me wele,
And yet such sorrow did I fele,
That all day I chaunged hew,
Of my woundes fresh and new,
As men might see in my visage,
The arrowes were so full of rage,
So variaunt of diversitee,
That men in everiche might see

Both great annoy and eke sweetnesse,
And joy meint with bitternesse :
Now were they casie, now were they wood,
In hem I felt both harme and good,
Now sore without alleggement,
Now softing with the ointement,
It softened here, and priked there,
Thus ease and anger together were.

THE god of love deliverly
Come lepande to me hastely,
And saied to me in great jape,
“ Yeeld thee, for thou may not escape,
May no defence availe thee here :
Therefore I rede make no daungere.
If thou wold yeeld thee hastely,
Thou shalt rather have mercy :
He is a foole in sikernesse,
That with daunger or stoutnesse
Rebelleth there that he should please,
In such folly is little ease.
Be meeke, where thou must needes bowe,
To strive ayen is not thy prowé :
Come at ones, and have ido,
For I woll that it be so,
Then yeeld thee here debonairly.”
And I answered full humbly,
“ Gladly sir, at your bidding,
I woll me yeeld in all thing :
To your service I woll me take,
For God defend that I should make
Ayen your bidding resistence.
I woll not doen so great offence,
For if I did, it were no skill,

Ye may do with me what ye will,
Save or spill, and also slo,
Fro you in no wise may I go,
My life, my death, is in your hond,
I may not last out of your bond,
Plaine at your list I yeeld me,
Hoping in heart, that sometime ye
Comfort and ese shull me send :
Or els shortly, this is the end,
Withouten health I mote aye dure,
But if ye take me to your cure :
Comfort or health, how should I have,
Sith ye me hurt, but ye me save ?
The health of love mote be found,
Whereas they token first hir wound :
And if ye list of me to make
Your prisoner, I woll it take
Of heart and willfully at gree,
Holy and plaine I yeeld mee
Without feining or feintise,
To be governed by your emprise :
Of you I heare so much prise,
I woll been whole at your devise
For to fulfill your liking
And repent for nothing,
Hoping to have yet in some tide
Mercy, of that I abide :”
And with that covenant yeeld I mee,
Anon downe kneeling upon my knee,
Profering for to kisse his fete,
But for nothing he would me lete.

And said, “ I love thee both and preise,
Sens that thine answer doth me ese :
For thou answered so curtesly,

For now I wote well utterly,
That thou art gentle by thy speech :
For though a man ferre would seech,
He shuld not finden in certaine,
No such answere of no villaine :
For such a worde ne might nought
Issue out of a villaines thought.
Thou shalt not lesen of thy speche,
For thy helping woll I eche,
And eke encreasen that I may :
But first I woll that thou obay
Fully for thine avauntage
Anone to doe me here homage :
And sithe kisse thou shalt my mouth,
Which to no villaine was never couth
For to approch it, ne for to touch,
For saufe of cherles I ne vouch
That they shall never neigh it nere ;
For curteis, and of faire manere,
Well taught, and full of gentlenesse
He must be, that shall me kisse,
And also of full high fraunchise,
That shall attaine to that emprise.

“ And first of o thing warne I thee,
That paine and great adversitee
He mote endure, and eke travaile
That shall me serve, without faile,
But there againe thee to comfort,
And with thy service to disport,
Thou maiest full glad and joyfull bee
So good a maister to have as mee,
And lord of so high renoune,
I beare of Love the gonfenoune,
Of curtesie the banere,

For I am of the selfe manere,
Gentle, courteous, meeke and free,
That who ever ententive bee
Me to honour, doute, and serve,
And also that he him observe
Fro trespasse and fro villanie,
And him governe in courtesie,
With will and entention ;
For when he first in my prison
Is caught, then must he utterly,
Fro thenceforth full busily,
Cast him gentle for to be,
If he desire helpe of me."

Anon without more delay,
Withouten daunger or affray,
I become his man anone,
And gave him thankes many a one,
And kneled doune with hondes joint,
And made it in my port full queint :
The joy went to my herte rote,
Whan I had kissed his mouth so swote,
I had such mirth and such liking,
It cured me of languishing.
He asked of me than hostages,
" I have," he sayd, " taken fele homages
Of one and other, where I have bene,
Distreined oft, withouten wene,
These felons full of falsite,
Have many sithes beguiled me,
And through hir falshed hir lust atchieved,
Whereof I repent and am agreeved,
And I hem get in my daungere,
Hir falshed shall they bie full dere,
But for I love thee, I say thee plaine,

I woll of thee be more certaine,
For thee sore I woll now binde,
That thou away ne shalt not winde,
For to denien thy covenaut,
Or done that is not avenaunt,
That thou were false, it were great ruth,
Sith thou seemest so ful of truth."

" Sir, if thee list to understand,
I marvaile thee asking this demaund,
For why or wherefore should ye,
Hostages or borowes aske of me,
Or any other sikernesse,
Sith ye wote in sothfastnesse,
That ye me have surprised so,
And hold mine heart, taken me fro,
That it woll doe for me nothing,
But if it be at your bidding,
Mine herte is yours, and mine right nought
As it behoveth, in deede and thought,
Ready in all to worke your will,
Whether so tourne to good or ill,
So sure it lusteth you to plese,
No man thereof may you disese,
Ye have thereon set such justise,
That it is werried in many wise,
And if ye doubt it n'old obaie,
Ye may thereof do make a kaie,
And hold it with you for hostage."

" Now certes this is none outrage,"
(Quoth Love) " and fully I accord,
For of the bodie he is full lord
That hath the heart in his treasure,
Outrage it were to asken more."

THAN of his aumener he drough,
A little key fetise inough,
Which was of gold polished clere
And sayed to me, " With this keye here,
Thine herte to me now woll I shet,
For all my jowel loke and knet,
I binde under this little kay,
That no wight may carie away."

This key is full of great poste,
With which anone he touched me,
Under the side full softly,
That he mine herte sodainely,
Without annoy had speered,
That yet right nought it hath me decreed,
When he had done his will all out,
And I had put him out of doubt,
" Sir," I sayd, " I have right great will,
Your lust and pleasure to fulfill,
Looke ye my service take at gree,
By thilke fayth ye owe to me,
I say nought for recreaundise,
For I nought doubt of your service.

" But the servaunt travaileth in vaine,
That for to serven doth his paine
Unto that lord, which in no wise,
Conne him no thanke for his service."

LOVE sayed, Dismaie thee nought,
Sith thou for succour hast me sought,
In thanke thy service woll I take,
And high of degree woll thee make,
If wickednesse ne hinder thee,
But (as I hope) it shall nought bee,
To worship no wight by aventure,

May come, but he paine endure.

“ Abide and suffer thy distresse,
That hurteth now, it shall be lesse.
I wote my selfe what may thee save,
What medicine thou wouldest have.
And if thy truth to me thou keepe,
I shall unto thine helping eke,
To cure thy woundes and make hem clene.
Where so they be old or grene,
Thou shalt be holpen at wordes few,
For certainly thou shalt well shew,
Where that thou servest with good will,
For to accomplishen and fulfill
My commaundements day and night,
Which I to lovers yeve of right.”

“ AH sir, for Goddes love” (sayd I)

“ Er ye passe hence ententifely,
Your commaundements to me say,
And I shall keepe hem if I may,
For hem to keepen is all my thought :
And if so be I wote hem nought,
Than may I unwittingly,
Wherefore I pray you entierly,
With all mine herte, me to lere,
That I trespase in no manere.”

The god of love then charged me
Anon, as ye shall here and see,
Word by word, by right emprise,
So as the Romaunt shall devise.

The maister leseth his time to lere,
When the disciple woll not here,
It is but vaine on him to swinke,
That on his learning woll not thinke,

Who so lust love, let him entend,
For now the Romance beginneth to amend.

Now is good to heare in fay,
If any be that can it say,
And point it as the reason is
Set for other gate ywis,
It shall nat well in all thing,
Be brought to good understanding,
For a reader that pointeth ill,
A good sentence may oft spill :
The booke is good at the ending,
Made of newe and lustie thing :
For who so woll the ending here,
The craft of love he shall now lere,
If that he woll so long abide,
Till I this Romaunce maie unhide,
And undoe the signifiounce
Of this dreame into Romaunce,
The soothfastnesse that now is hid,
Without coverture shall be kid,
When I undoen have this dreaming,
Wherein no worde is of leasing.

“ VILLANIE at the beginning,
I woll,” sayd Love, “ over all thing
Thou leave, if thou wolt ne be
False, and trespase ayenst me ;
I curse and blame generally
All hem that loven villany,
For villanie maketh villeine
And by his deeds a chorle is seine.

“ These villaines arne without pitie,
Friendship, love, and all bountie.
I nill receive unto my servise

Hem that been villaines of emprise.

“But understand in thine entent,
That this is not mine entendement,
To clepe no wight in no ages
Onely gentle for his linages :
But who so is vertuous,
And in his port not outrageous,
When such one thou seest thee beforne,
Though he be not gentle borne,
Thou maiest well seine this in sooth,
That he is gentle, because he doth
As longeth to a gentleman :
Of hem none other deme I can,
For certainly withouten dreede,
A chorle is demed by his deede,
Of hye or lowe, as ye may see,
Or of what kinred that he bee.
Ne say nought for none evill will,
Thing that is to holden still,
It is no worship to mis-saie,
Thou mayest ensample take of Kaie,
That was sometime for mis-sayeng,
Hated both of old and yeng :
As ferre as Gawein the worthie,
Was prayed for his courtesie,
Kaie was hated, for he was fell,
Of word dispitous and cruell ;
Wherefore be wise and acquetable,
Goodly of word, and reasonable :
Both to lesse and eke to mare,
And when thou comest there men are,
Looke that thou have in custome ay,
First to salve hem if thou may :
And if it fall, that of hem somme

Salve the first, be not domme,
But quite him courtesly anone
Without abiding, ere they gone.

“For nothing eke thy tongue applie
To speake words of ribauldrie,
To villaine speech in no degree
Let never thy lippe unbounden bee :
For I nought hold him in good faith
Curteis, that foule wordes saith :
And all women serve and preise,
And to thy power hir honour reise :
And if that any mis-sayere
Despise women, that thou maist here,
Blame him, and bid him hold him still,
And set thy might and all thy will
Women and ladies for to please,
And to doe thing that may hem ease,
That they ever speake good of thee,
For so thou maiest best praised bee.

“Looke fro pride thou keepe thee wele,
For thou maiest both perceiue and feele,
That pride is both folly and sin,
And he that pride hath him within,
Ne may his herte in no wise,
Meken ne souplen to service :
For pride is found in everie part,
Contrarie unto Loves art :
And he that loveth truely,
Should him conteine jollily,
Without pride in sundrie wise,
And him disguisen in queintise,
For queint array, without drede,
Is nothing proude, who taketh hede,
For fresh array, as men may see,

Without pride may ofte bee.

“ Maintaine thy selfe after thy rent,
Of robe and eke of garment,
For many sithe faire clothing
A man amendeth in much thing.

“ And looke alway that they be shape,
(What garment that thou shalt make)
Of him that can best do,
With all that pertaineth thereto,
Pointes and sleeves be well sittand,
Right and streight on the hand,
Of shone and bootes, new and faire,
Looke at the least you have a paire,
And that they sit so fetously,
That these rude may utterly
Marvaile, sith that they sit so plaine,
How they come on or off againe.
Weare streighte gloves with aumere
Of silke : and alway with good chere
Thou yeve, if thou have richesse,
And if thou have nought, spend the lesse.
Alway be merry, if thou may,
But waste not thy good alway ;
Have hatte of floures fresh as May,
Chapelet of roses of Whitsunday,
For such arraie ne costneth but lite.
Thine hondes wash, thy teeth make white,
And let no filth upon thee bee,
Thy nayles blacke, if thou maiest see,
Voide it alwaie deliverly,
And kembe thine head right jollily :
Farce not thy visage in no wise,
For that of love is nat th'emprise,
For love doth haten, as I finde,

A beautie that commeth not of Kinde :
Alway in herte I read thee,
Glad and merry for to be,
And be as joyfull as thou can,
Love hath no joy of sorrowfull man,
That evill is full of curtesie,
That knoweth in his maladie,
For ever of love the sicknesse
Is meint with sweete and bitternesse :
The sore of love is marvailous,
For now the lover is joyous,
Now can he plaine, now can he grone,
Now can he singen, now maken mone,
To day he plaineth for heavinesse,
To morrow he plaineth for jolynesse :
The life of love is full contrarie,
Which stoundemele can oft varie ;
But if thou canst mirthes make,
That men in gre woll gladly take,
Doe it goodly I command thee,
For men should, wheresoever they be,
Doe thing that hem fitting is,
For thereof commeth good loos and pris.
Whereof that thou be vertuous,
Ne be nat straunge ne daungerous :
For if that thou good rider be,
Pricke gladly that men may see ;
In armes also if thou conne,
Pursue till thou a name hast wonne :
And if thy voice be faire and clere,
Thou shalt maken no great daungere.
Whan to sing they goodly pray,
It is thy worship for to obay :
Also to you it longeth aye,

To harpe and citterne, daunce and playe,
For if he can well foot and daunce,
It may him greatly doe avaunce,
Emong eke for thy lady sake,
Songes and complaintes that thou make,
For that meven in her hart,
When they readen of thy smart.
Looke that no man for scarce thee hold,
For that may greeve thee manifold :
Reason woll that a lover be
In his yestes more large and free
Than chorles that been not of loving,
For who thereof can any thing,
He shall be lefe aie for to yeve,
In londes lore who so woll leve,
For he that through a sodain sight,
Or for a kissing anon right,
Yave hole his heart, in will and thought,
And to himselfe keepeth right nought,
After this swift, it is good reason,
He yeve his good in abandon.

“ Now woll I shortly here reherse,
Of that I have sayd in verse,
All the sentence by and by,
In wordes fewe compendiously,
That thou the better mayest on hem thinke,
Whether so it be thou wake or winke,
For the wordes little greeve,
A man to keepe, when it is breeve.

“ Who so with Love woll gone or ride
He mote be courteous, and voide of pride,
Merry and full of jollite,
And of largesse a losed be.

“ First I joyne thee here in penaunce,
That ever without repentaunce,
Thou set thy thought in thy loving
To last without repenting,
And thinke upon thy mirthes sweet
That shall follow after whan ye meet.

“ And for thou true to love shalt be,
I will and commaunde thee,
That in one place thou set all hole
Thine herte, without halfen dole,
For trecherie and sikernesse,
For I loved never doublenesse :
To many his herte that woll depart,
Everich shall have but little part,
But of him drede I me right nought,
That in one place setteth his thought :
Therefore in o place it set,
And let it never thence flet :
For if thou yevest it in lening,
I holde it but wretched thing :
Therefore yeve it whole and quite,
And thou shalt have the more merite.
If it be lent than after soone,
The bountie and the thanks is doone,
But in love, free yeven thing
Requireth a great guerdoning.

“ Yeve it in yest all quite fully,
And make thy gift debonairly :
For men that yest holde more dere
That yeven is with gladsome chere.

“ That gifte nought to praysen is
That man yeveth maugre his :
Whan thou hast yeven thine heart (as I
Have sayd) thee here openly,

Than adventures shull thee fall,
Which hard and heavie been withall :
For oft when thou bethinkest thee
Of thy loving, where so thou be,
Fro folke thou must depart in hie,
That none perceive thy maladie,
But hide thine harme thou must alone,
And go forth sole, and make thy mone :
Thou shalt no while be in o state,
But whilom cold and whilom hate,
Now redde as rose, now yellow and fade,
Such sorow I trow thou never hade :
Cotidien, ne quarteine,
It is not so full of peine,
For often times it shall fall,
In love among thy paines all,
That thou thy selfe all holy,
Foryetten shalt so utterly,
That many times thou shalt bee,
Still as an image of tree,
Domme as a stone, without stirring
Of foote or honde, without speaking.

“ Than soone after all thy paine,
To memorie shalt thou come againe,
A man abashed wonder sore,
And after sighen more and more :
For wite thou wele withouten wene,
In such a state full oft have bene,
That have the evill of love assaide,
Wher-through thou art so dismaide.

“ AFTER a thought shall take thee so,
That thy love is too ferre the fro :
Thou shalt say, ‘ God, what may this be,

That I ne may my ladie see?
Mine heart alone is to her goe,
And I abide all sole in woe,
Departed fro mine owne thought,
And with mine eien se right nought.

“ ‘ Alas mine eyen sene I ne may,
My carefull herte to convay,
Mine hertes guide, but they be,
I praise nothing what ever they se:
Shull they abide than, nay,
But gone and visiten without delay
That mine heart desireth so
For certainly, but if they go.

“ ‘ A foole my selfe I may well hold,
When I ne se what mine hart wold,
Wherefore I woll gone her to sene,
Or eased shall I never bene,
But I have some tokening.’

“ Then goest thou forth without dwelling,
But oft thou faylest of thy desire,
Er thou mayest come her any nere,
And wastest in vaine thy passage:
Than fallest thou in a new rage,
For want of sight thou ginnest mourne,
And homeward pensive thou dost retourne:
In great mischief thou shalt thou bee,
For than againe shall come to thee
Sighes and plaintes with new wo,
That no itching pricketh so:
Who wote it nought, he may goe lere,
Of hem that buyen love so dere.

“ Nothing thine heart appeasen may,
That oft thou wolt gone and assay,
If thou maiest secne by adventure

Thy lives joy, thine heartes cure,
So that by grace, if thou might
Attaine of her to have a sight,
Than shalt thou done none other deed,
But with that sight thine eyen feed :
That faire fresh whan thou mayst see,
Thine herte shall so ravished bee,
That never thou wouldest thy thanks lete
Ne remove, for to see that swete :
The more thou seest in soothfastnesse,
The more thou covetest of that sweetnesse :
The more thine herte brenneth in fire,
The more thine herte is in desire.
For who considereth everie dele,
It may be likened wonder wele,
The paine of love unto a fere,
For evermore thou neigest nere,
Thought, or who so that it be,
For verie sooth I tell it thee,
The hotter ever shalt thou brenne,
As experience shall thee kenne,
Where so comest in any cost,
Who is next fire he brenneth most :
And yet forsooth for all thine heat,
Though thou for love swelte and sweat,
Ne for no thing thou felen may,
Thou shalt not willen to passe away,
And though thou goe, yet must thou nede,
Thinke all day on her faire hede,
Whome thou beheld with so good will,
And hold thy selfe beguiled ill,
That thou ne hadst ne hardiment,
To shew her ought of thine entent ;
Thine herte full sore thou wolt dispise,

And eke reprove of cowardise,
That thou so dull in every thing,
Were domme for drede, without speaking.

“Thou shalt eke thinke thou didst folly,
That thou were her so faste by,
And durst not aunte thee to say
Some thing er thou came away,
For thou hadest no more wonne,
To speake of her whan thou begonne:
But yet if she would for thy sake,
In armes goodly thee have take,
It should have be more worth to thee,
Than of treasure great plentee.

“Thus shalt thou mourne and eke complain,
And yet encheson to gone again,
Unto thy walke, or to thy place,
Where thou beheld her fleshly face,
And never for false suspicion,
Thou wouldest finde occasion,
For to gone unto her house,
So art thou than desirouse,
A sight of her for to have,
If thou thine honour mightest save,
Or any errand mightest make
Thider, for thy loves sake:
Full faine thou wouldest, but for drede
Thou goest not, least that men take heede,
Wherefore I read in thy going,
And also in thine againe comming,
Thou be well ware that men ne wit,
Feine thee other cause than it,
To goe that way, or fast bie,
To heale well is no follie:
And if so be it happe thee,

That thou thy love there mayst see,
In siker wise thou her salewe,
Wherewith thy colour woll transmewe,
And eke thy bloud shall all to quake,
Thy hewe eke chaungen for her sake,
But word and wit, with chere full pale
Shull want for to tell thy tale,
And if thou mayest so ferre forth winne,
That thou reason durst beginne,
And wouldest saine three things or mo,
Thou shalt full scarcely saine the two,
Though thou bethinke thee never so wele,
Thou shalt foryete yet somedeale.

“ But if thou deale with trechery,
For false lovers mowe all foully
Sain what hem lust withouten dred,
They be so double in hir falsbed,
For they in herte can thinke o thing
And saine another, in hir speaking,
• And when thy speech is ended all,
Right thus to thee it shall befall :
If any word than come to minde,
That thou to say hast left behinde,
Than thou shalt brenne in great martire,
For thou shalt brenne as any fire,
This is the strife and eke the affraie,
And the battaile that lasteth aie :
This bargaine end may never take,
But if that she thy peace will make.

“ And whan the night is commen anon,
A thousand angres shall come upon,
To bed as fast thou wolt thee dight,
There thou shalt have but small delight,

For whan thou wenest for to sleepe,
So full of paine shalt thou creepe,
Stert in thy bed about full wide,
And turne full oft on everie side :
Now downeward grolle, and now upright,
And wallow in woe the longe night,
Thine armes shalt thou sprede abrede,
As man in warre were forwerede.
Than shalt the come a remembraunce
Of her shape and her semblaunce,
Whereto none other may be pere,
And wete thou well without were,
That thee shall see sometime that night,
That thou hast her, that is so bright,
Naked betweene thine armes there,
All soothfastnesse as though it were ;
Thou shalt make castles than in Spaine,
And dreame of joy, all but in vaine,
And thee delighten of right nought,
While thou so slumbrest in that thought,
That is so sweete and delitable,
The which in sooth n'is but a fable,
For it ne shall no while last ;
Than shalt thou sigh and weepe fast,
And say, ' Deere God, what thing is this,
My dreame is turned all amis,
Which was full sweet and apparent :
But now I wake it is all shent,
Now yede this merry thought away,
Twentie times upon a day
I would this thought would come againe,
For it alleggeth well my paine,
It maketh me full of joyfull thought,
It sleeth me that it lasteth nought.

Ah Lord, why nill ye me succour ?
The joy I trow that I langour,
The death I would me shoulde slo,
While I lye in her armes two,
Mine harme is hard withouten wene,
My great unease full oft I mene.

“ But woulde Love do so I might
Have fully joy of her so bright,
My paine were quit me richely,
Alas too great a thing aske I :
It is but folly, and wrong wening,
To aske so outragious a thing,
And who so asketh follily,
He mote be warned hastily,
And I ne wote what I may say,
I am so ferre out of the way,
For I would have full great liking,
And full great joy of lasse thing,
For would she of her gentlenesse,
Withouten more, me ones kesse,
It were to me a great guerdon,
Release of all my passion :
But it is hard to come thereto,
All is but folly that I do,
So high I have mine herte set,
Where I may no comfort get,
I wote not where I say well or nought,
But this I wote well in my thought,
That it were bette of her alone
For to stint my woe and mone :
A looke on her I cast goodly,
That for to have all utterly,
Of another all hole the play.

Ah Lord, where shall I bide the day
That ever she shall my ladie be,
He is full cured, that may her see.
Ah God, when shall the dawning spring,
To ligger thus as an angrie thing,
I have no joy thus here to lye,
When that my love is not me bye :
A man to lye hath great disease,
Which may not sleepe ne rest in ease,
I would it dawed, and were now day,
And that the night were went away,
For were it day, I would up rise,
Ah slowe Sunne, shew thine enprise,
Speede thee to spread thy beames bright,
And chase the darknesse of the night,
To put away the stoundes strong,
Which in me lasten all too long.

“ The night shalt thou continue so,
Without rest, in paine and wo,
If ever thou knew of love distresse,
Thou shalt no learne in that sicknesse,
And thus enduring shalt thou lye
And rise on morow up earlye,
Out of thy bed, and harneis thee
Er ever dawning thou maiest see :
All privily than shalt thou gone,
What whider it be, thy selfe alone,
For raine, or haile, for snow, for slete,
Thider she dwelleth that is so swete,
The which may fall asleepe bee,
And thinketh but little upon thee.
Than shalt thou goe, full foule aserde,
Looke if the gate be unsperde,
And waite without in woe and paine,

Full evill a cold in mind and raine :
Than shalt thou goe the dore before,
If thou mayest finde any shore,
Or hole, or rest, what ever it were,
Than shalt thou stoupe, and lay to care
If they within a sleepe be,
I meane all save thy ladie free,
Whom waking if thou mayest espie,
Goe put thy selfe in jeopardie,
To aske grace, and thee himene,
That she may wete without wene,
That thou all night no rest hast had,
So sore for her thou were bestad.

“ Women well ought pitie to take
Of hem that sorrowen for hir sake.
And looke for love of that relike,
That thou thinke none other like,
For whan thou hast so great annoy,
Shall kisse thee er thou goe away,
And hold that in full great deintee,
And for that no man shall thee see
Before the house, ne in the way,
Looke thou be gon againe er day.
Suche comming, and suche going,
Such heavinesse, and such walking,
Maketh lovers withouten wene,
Under hir clothes pale and lene,
For Love leaveth colour ne clearnesse,
Who loveth trew hath no fatnesse,
Thou shalt well by thy selfe see
That thou must needs assaied bee :
For men that shape hem other way
Falsely hir ladies to betray,
It is no wonder though they be fatte,

With false othes her loves they gatte,
 For oft I see such losengeours
 Fatter than abbots or priours.

“ Yet with o thing I thee charge,
 That is to say, that thou be large
 Unto the maid, that her doth serve,
 So best her thanke thou shalt deserve.
 Yeve her giftes, and get her grace,
 For so thou may thanke purchase,
 That she thee worthy hold and free,
 Thy ladie, and all that may thee see.
 Also her servaunts worship aie,
 And please as muche as thou maie,
 Great good through hem may come to thee,
 Because with her they been privee :
 They shall her tell how they thee fand
 Curteous and wise, and well doand,
 And she shall preise well thee more.
 Looke out of lond thou be not fore,
 And if such cause thou have, that thee
 Behoveth to gone out of countree,
 Leave hole thine herte in hostage,
 Till thou againe make thy passage,
 Thinke long to see the swete thing
 That hath thine heart in her keeping.

“ Now have I told thee, in what wise
 A lover shall doe me servise,
 Do it than, if thou wolte have
 The mede that thou after crave.”

WHEN Love all this had boden me,
 I said him : “ Sir how may it be
 That lovers may in such manere,
 Endure the paine ye have sayd here ?

I marvaile me wonder fast,
How any man may live or last
In suche paine, and such brenning,
In sorrow and thought, and such sighing,
Aie unreleased woe to make,
Whether so it be they sleepe or wake,
In such annoy continually,
As helpe me God this marvaile I
How man, but he were made of steele,
Might live a moneth, such pains to feele."

THE god of love then sayd me,
" Friend, by the faith I owe to thee,
May no man have good, but he it buy :
A man loveth more tenderly
The thing that he hath bought most dere.
For wete thou well without were,
In thanke that thing is taken more,
For which a man hath suffred sore :
Certes no woe ne may attaine,
Unto the sore of loves paine,
None evill thereto ne may amount,
No more than a man count
The drops that of the water bee :
For drie as well the grete see
Thou mightest, as the harmes tell
Of hem that with Love dwell
In service, for paine hem sleeth,
And that eche would flee the death
And trowe they should never escape,
Nere that hope couth hem make,
Glad as man in prison sete,
And may not getten for to ete
But barly bread, and water pure,

And lyeth in vermin and in ordure,
With all this yet can he live,
Good hope such comfort hath him yeve,
Which maketh wene that he shall be
Delivered and come to libertie,
In fortune is full trust,
Though he lye in straw or dust,
In hope is all his sustaining :
And so faire lovers in her wening,
Which love hath set in his prison
Good hope is her salvation :
Good hope (how sore that they smart)
Yeveth hem both will and hart
To profer her body to martire,
For hope so sore doth hem desire
To suffer each harme that men devise,
For joy that afterward shall arise.

HOPE in desire catch victorie,
In hope of love is all the glorie,
For hope is all that love may yeve,
Nere hope, there should no lenger live.
Blessed be hope, which with desire,
Avaunceth lovers in such manire.
Good hope is curteis for to please,
To keepe lovers from all disease.
Hope keepeth his lond, and woll abide,
For any perill that may betide,
For hope to lovers, as most chiefe,
Doth hem endure all mischiefē,
Hope is hir helpe whan mistere is.
And I shall yeve thee eke ywis,
Three other thinges, that great sollace
Doth to hem that be in my lace.

“ The firste good that may be found,
To hem that in my lace be bound,
Is swete thought, for to record
Thing wherewith thou canst accord
Best in thine herte, where she be,
Thinking in absence is good to thee.
Whan any lover doth complaine,
And liveth in distresse and in paine
Than swete thought shall come as blive,
Away his anger for to drive,
It maketh lovers to have remembraunce
Of comfort, and of high pleasaunce,
That hope hath hight him for to winne,
For thought anone than shall beginne,
As farre God wote as he can finde,
To make a mirroure of his minde,
For to behold he woll not let,
Her person he shall afore him set,
Her laughing eyen persaunt and clere,
Her shape, her form, her goodly chere,
Her mouth that is so gracious,
So swete, and eke so savourous,
Of all her feyters he shall take heed,
His eyen with all her limmes feed.

Thus swete thinking shall aswage
The paine of lovers, and hir rage,
Thy joy shall double without gesse
Whan thou thinkest on her seemelinesse,
Or of her laughing, or of her chere
That to thee made thy lady dere,
This comfort woll I that thou take,
And if the next thou wolt forsake
Which is not lesse saverous,
Thou shouldest not ben too daungerous.

“ THE second shall be swete speche,
That hath to many one be leche,
To bring hem out of woe and were,
And helpe many a bachelere,
And many a ladie sent succour,
That have loved paramour,
Through speaking, whan they might heare,
Of hir lovers to hem so deare :
To me it voideth all hir smart,
The which is closed in hir hart.
In heart it maketh hem glad and light,
Speech, whan they mowe have sight.
And therefore now it commeth to mind,
In olde dawes as I find,
That clerkes written that her knew,
There was a ladie fresh of hew,
Which of her love made a song,
On him for to remember among,
In which she sayd, ‘ Whan that I heare
Spoken of him that is so deare,
To me it voideth all smart,
Ywis he sitteth so nere mine hart,
To speake of him at eve or morrow,
It cureth me of all my sorrow,
To me is none so high pleasaunce
As of his person daliaunce :’
She wist full well that sweet speaking
Comforteth in full muche thing,
Her love she had full well assaide,
Of him she was full well apaide,
To speake of him her joy was set.
Therefore I read thee that thou get
A fellow that can well counsele,
And keepe thy counsaile, and welhele

To whom goe shew wholly thine hart
Both wele and woe, joy and smart :
To get comfort to him thou go,
And prively between you two,
Ye shall speake of that goodly thing,
That hath thine heart in her keeping,
Of her beaute and her semblaunce,
And of her goodly countenance,
Of all thy state, thou shalt him say,
And aske him counsaile how thou may,
Do any thing that may her please,
For it to thee shall doe great ease,
That he may wete thou trust him so,
Both of thy wele and of thy wo.
And if his heart to love be sette,
His companie is much the bette,
For reason woll he shew to thee
All utterly his privite,
And what she is he loveth so
To thee plainly he shall undo,
Without drede of any shame,
Both tell her renome and her name.
Than shall he further farre and nere,
And namely to thy ladie dere
In siker wise, ye every other,
Shall helpen as his owne brother,
In trouthe without doublenesse,
And keepen close in sikernesse :
For it is noble thing in fay,
To have a man thou darste say
Thy privie counsaile everie dele,
For that woll comfort thee right wele,
And thou shalt hold thee well apaide,
When such a friend thou hast assaide.

“ THE thirde good of great comfort
That yeveth to lovers most disport,
Commeth of sight and beholding,
That cleped is swete looking,
The whiche may thee none ease do,
Whan thou art ferre thy ladie fro,
Wherefore thou prese alway to be
In place, where thou mayest her see :
For it is thing most amerous
Most delectable and saverous,
For to asswage a mannes sorrow
To seen his ladie by the morrow,
For it is a full noble thing
Whan thine eyen have meeting,
With that relike precious,
Whereof they be so desirous.
But all day after sooth it is,
They have no drede to faren amis,
They dreden neither winde ne raine,
Ne none other manner paine :
For when thine eyen were thus in blisse,
Yet of her courtesie ywisse
Alone they cannot have hir joy,
But to the herte they convoy
Part of hir blisse, to him thou send,
Of all this harme to make an end.

“ The eye is a good messenger,
Which can to the heart in such manner
Tidinges sende, that hath sene
To voide him of his paines clene :
Whereof the heart rejoyseth so
That a great partie of his wo
Is voided, and put away to flight.
Right as the darkenesse of the night

Is chased with clerenesse of the moone,
Right so is all his woe full soone
Devoided cleane, whan that the sight
Beholden may that fresh wight
That the herte desireth so,
That all his darknesse is ago,
For than the herte is all at ease,
Whan they seen that may hem please.

Now have I declared thee all out,
Of that thou were in dread and dout,
For I have told thee faithfully,
What thee may curen utterly,
And all lovers that woll be
Faithfull, and full of stabilite,
Good hope alway keepe by thy side,
And sweet thought make eke abide,
Sweet looking and sweet speche,
Of all thine harmes they shall be leche,
Of everie thou shalt have great pleasaunce,
If thou canst bide in sufferance,
And serve well without feintise,
Thou shalt be quite of thine emprise
With more guerdoun, if that thou live,
But all this time this I thee yeve.

THE god of love, whan all the day
Had taught me, as ye have heard say,
And enformed compendously,
He vanished away all sodainly,
And I alone left all sole,
So full of complaint and of dole,
For I saw no man there me by.
My woundes me greeved wondersly,
Me for to curen nothing I knewe,

Save the bothum bright of hewe,
Whereon was sette hooly my thought,
Of other comfort knew I nought,
But it were through the God of Love,
I knew nat else to my behove
That might me ease or comfort gette,
But if he would him entermette.

The roser was withouten dout
Closed with an hedge without,
As ye toforne have heard me saine,
And fast I besied, and would faine
Have passed the haie, if I might
Have gotten in by any sleight
Unto the bothum so faire to see,
But ever I dradde blamed to bee,
If men would have suspicion
That I would of entention
Have stole the roses that there were,
Therefore to enter I was in fere.
But at the last, as I bethought
Whether I should passe or nought,
I sawe come with a glad chere
To me, a lusty bachelere,
Of good stature and of good height,
And BIALACoil forsooth he height :
Sonne he was to Curtesie,
And he me graunted full gladly,
The passage of the utter lay,
And sayd : “ Sir, how that you may
Passe, if your will bee
The freshe roser for to see :
And ye the swete savour fele,
Your warrans may right wele,
So thou thee keepe fro folly,

Shall no man doe thee villany,
If I may helpe you in ought,
I shall not faine, dredeth nought,
For I am bound to your servise,
Fully devoid of feintise.”
Than unto Bialacoil sayd I,
“I thanke you sir full hartely,
And your behest take at gree,
That ye so goodly profer mee,
To you it commeth of great fraunchise,
That ye me profer your servise.”

Than after full deliverly,
Through the breres anon went I,
Whereof encombred was the haie,
I was well pleased, the soth to saie,
To se the bothum faire and swote,
So freshe sprong out of the rote.

AND Bialacoil me served wele,
Whan I so nigh me might fele
Of the bothum the sweet odour,
And so lusty hewed of colour :
But than a chorle, foule him betide,
Beside the roses gan him hide,
To keepe the roses of that rosere,
Of whom the name was DAUNGERE :
This chorle was hid there in the greves,
Covered with grasse and with leves,
To spie and take whom that he fond
Unto that roser put an hond.

He was not sole, for there was mo,
For with him were other two
Of wicked manners, and evill fame,
That one was cleped by his name,

Wicked Tongue, God yeve him sorrow,
For neither at eve ne at morrow,
He can of no man good speake,
On many a just man doth he wreake.

There was a woman that eke hight
SHAME, that who can reckon right,
Trespasse was her fathers name,
Her mother Reason, and thus was Shame
Brought of these ilke two :
And yet had Trespasse never ado
With Reason, ne never leie her by,
He was hidous and so ugly,
I meane this that Trespasse hight,
But Reason conceiveth of a sight,
Shame of that I spake aforne.

And whan that Shame was thus borne,
It was ordained, that Chastite,
Should of the roser ladie be :
Which of the bothums more and las,
With sundrie folkes assailed was,
That she ne wiste what to do,
For Venus her assaileth so,
That night and day for her she stall
Bothums and roses over all.
To Reason than prayeth Chastite,
Whom Venus hath flemed over the see,
That she her daughter would her lene,
To keepe the roser fresh and grene.

Anon Reason to Chastite
Is fully assented that it be,
And graunted her at her request,
That Shame, because she is honest,
Shall keeper of the roser be :
And thus to keepe it, there were three

That none should hardy be ne bold,
(Were he young or were he old)
Againe her will away to bere
Bothums ne roses, that there were.
I had well sped, had I nat been
Awaited with these three, and seen :
For Bialacoil, that was so faire,
So gracious and debonaire,
Quitte him to me full courteously,
And me to please badde that I,
Should drawe to the bothum nere,
Prese in to touche the rosere
Which bare the roses, he yave me leve,
This graunt ne might but little greve :
And for he saw it liked me,
Right nigh the bothum pulled he
A leafe all grene, and yave me that
The which full nigh the bothum sat.
I made of that leafe full queint,
And whan I felt I was acquainted
With Bialacoil, and so prive,
I wende all my will had be.
Than wext I hardy for to tell
To Bialacoil how me befell,
Of love, that tooke and wounded me,
And sayd : “ Sir, so mote I thee,
I may no joy have in no wise,
Upon no side, but it arise,
For sithe (if I shall not faine)
In herte I have had so great paine,
So great annoy, and such affraie,
That I ne wotte what I shall saie,
I drede your wrothe to deserve,
Lever me were, that knives kerve

My bodie should in peces small,
Than in any wise it should fall,
That ye wrothed should been with me."

"Say boldely thy will" (quod he)
"I nill be wroth if that I may,
For nought that thou shalt to me say."

THAN sayd I, "Sir, not you displese,
To knowen of my great unease,
In which only love hath me brought,
For paines great, disease and thought,
Fro day to day it doth me drie,
Supposeth not, sir, that I lie,
In me five woundes did he make,
The sore of which shall never slake,
But ye the bothum graunt me,
Which is most passaunt of beaute,
My life, my death, and my martire,
And treasure that I most desire."

Than Bialacoil affraied all
Sayd "Sir, it may not fall,
That ye desire it may not arise,
What would ye shend me in this wise:
A mokell foole than I were,
If I suffred you away to beare
The fresh bothum, so faire of sight,
For it were neither skill ne right,
Of the roser ye broke the rinde,
Or take the rose aforne his kinde;
Ye are not courteous to aske it,
Let it still on the roser sit,
And let it grow till it amended be,
And perfectly come to beaute,
I nolde not that it pulled were,

Fro the roser that it bere,
To me it is so lefe and dere.”
With that anon start out Daungere,
Out of the place where he was hidde,
His malice in his chere was kidde :
Full great he was and blacke of hewe,
Sturdy, and hidous, who so him knewe,
Like sharpe urchons his haire was grow,
His eyes red sparkling as the fire glow,
His nose frounced full kyked stood,
He come criand as he were wood,
And sayd, “ Bialacoil, tell me why
Thou bringest hider so boldely
Him that so nigh the rosere,
Thou worchest in a wrong manere,
He thinketh to dishonour thee,
Thou art well worthy to have maugre,
To let him of the rosere witte,
Who serveth a felon is evill quitte.

“ Thou wouldest have done great bountee,
And he with shame would quite thee,
Flye hence, fellow, I rede thee go,
It wanteth little he woll thee slo,
For Bialacoil ne knew thee nought,
Whan thee to serve he set his thought,
For thou wolt shame him if thou might,
Both againe reson and right,
I woll no more in thee affie,
That commest so slightly for t'espie :
For it prooveth wonder wele,
Thy sleight and treason everie dele.”

I durst no more make there abode,
For the chorle he was so wode,
So gan he threat and menace,

And through the haie he did me chace,
For feare of him I trembled and quoke,
So chorlishly his head he shoke,
And sayd, if eft he might me take,
I should not from his hands scape.
Than Bialacoil is fled and mate,
And I all soole disconsolate,
Was left alone in paine and thought,
Fro shame to death I was nigh brought.
Than thought I on my high folly,
How that my bodie utterly,
Was yeve to paine and to martire,
And thereto had I so great ire,
That I ne durst the haies passe,
There was no hope, there was no grace,
I trow never man wist of paine,
But he were laced in Loves chaine,
Ne no man, and sooth it is,
But if he love, what anger is.

Love holdeth his hest to me right wele,
Whan paine (he sayd) I should fele,
No herte may thinke, no tongue saine,
A quarter of my woe and paine,
I might not with the anger last,
Mine heart in point was for to brast,
Whan I thought on the rose, that so,
Was through Daunger cast me fro,
A long while stoode I in that state,
Till that me sawe so madde and mate,
The ladie of the high ward,
Which from her tower looked thiderward.

Reason, men clepe that lady,
Which from her tower deliverly,
Come downe to me without more.

But she was neither young, ne hore,
Ne high ne low, ne fat ne leane,
But best, as it were in a meane :
Her eyen two were clere and light
As any candle that brenneth bright,
And on her head she had a croune,
Her seemed well an high persoune :
For round environ her crounet
Was full of riche stones fret.
Her goodly semblaunt by devise,
I trow was made in Paradise,
For nature had never such a grace,
To forge a worke of such compace :
For certain, but if the letter lye,
God him selfe, that is so hye,
Made her after his image,
And yafe her sith such advantage,
That she hath might and seignory
To keepe men from all folly,
Who so woll trowe her lore,
Ne may offenden nevermore.

And while I stode this darke and pale,
Reason began to me her tale,
She saied : “ Alhaile my sweete frend,
Folly and childhood woll thee shend,
Which thee have put in great affray,
Thou hast bought dere time of May,
That made thine herte merrie to be ;
In evill time thou wentest to see
The gardin, whereof Idlenesse
Bare the key and was maistresse
Whan thou yedest in the daunce
With her, and had acquaintaunce :
Her acquaintance is perillous,

First soft, and after noyous,
She hath thee trashed without wene,
The god of love had thee not sene,
Ne had Idlennesse thee convaيد
In the verge where Mirth him pleid,
If Folly have surprised thee,
Do so that it recovered be,
And be well ware to take no more
Counsaile, that greeveth after sore :
He is wise, that woll himselfe chastise.

And though a young man in any wise
Trespasse among, and do folly,
Let him nat tarie, but hastely
Let him amend what so be mis,
And eke I counsaile thee ywis,
The god of love hooly foryet,
That hath thee in such paine set,
And thee in herte tormenteth so,
I cannot seen how thou maist go
Other waies thee to garisoun,
For Daunger, that is so feloun,
Felly purposeth thee to werry,
Which is full cruell the sooth to sey.

“ AND yet of Daunger cometh no blame,
In reward of my daughter Shame,
Which hath the roses in her ward,
As she that may be no musard,
And Wicked Tongue is with these two,
That suffreth no man thider go,
For er a thing be do he shall,
Where that he commeth over all,
In fortie places, if it be sought,
Saie thing that never was done ne wrought,

So much treason is in his male,
Of falsenesse for to faine a tale :
Thou dealest with angrie folke ywis,
Wherefore to thee better is,
From these folke away to fare,
For they woll make thee live in care ;
This is the evill that love they call,
Wherein there is but folly all,
For love is folly everie dele ;
Who loveth, in no wise may do wele,
Ne set his thought on no good werke,
His schoole he leseth, if he be a clerke,
Or other craft eke, if that he be,
He shall not thrive therein, for he
In love shall have more passioun,
Than monke, hermite, or chanoun :
This paine is hard out of measure,
The joy may eke no while endure,
And in the possession,
Is much tribulation,
The joye it is so short lasting,
And but in hap is the getting ;
For I see there many in travaile,
That at last foule faile,
I was nothing thy counsailer,
Whan thou were made the homager
Of god of love too hastely :
Where was no wisdom but folly,
Thine herte was jolly, but not sage,
Whan thou were brought in such a rage,
To yelde thee so readyly,
And to Love of his great maistrie.

“ I REDE thee Love away to drive,

That maketh the recche not of thy live,
The folly more fro day to day
Shall growe, but thou it put away;
Take with thy teeth the bridle fast,
To daunt thy herte, and eke the cast
If that thou mayest, to get the defence
For to redresse thy first offence.
Who so his herte alway woll love,
Shall finde among that shall him greve."

Whan I heard her thus me chastise,
I answeard in full angrie wise,
I prayed her cesse of her speach,
Either to chastise me or teach,
To bidde me my thought refrein,
Which Love hath caught in his demein :
" What wene ye Love woll consent,
(That me assaieth with bowe bent)
To draw mine herte out of his hond,
Which is so quickly in his bond ?
That ye counsaile, may never bee,
For whan he first arested mee,
He tooke mine herte so sore him till,
That it is nothing at my will,
He tought it so him for to obey,
That he it sparred with a key.
I pray you let me be all still,
For ye may well, if that ye will,
Your wordes wast in idlenesse,
For utterly withouten gesse,
All that ye sain is but in vaine,
Me were lever die in the paine,
Than Love to me ward should arette,
Falshed or treason on me sette,
I woll me get pris or blame,

And love true to save my name,
Who that me chastiseth, I him hate."

With that word, Reason went her gate,
Whan she saw for no sermoning
She might me fro my folly bring.
Than dismayed I left all soole,
Forwearie, forwandred as a foole,
For I ne knew ne cherisaunce.
Than fell into my remembraunce,
How Love bad me to purvey
A fellow, to whome I might sey
My counsaile and my privite,
For that shuld much availe me.

With that bethought I me, that I
Had a fellowe faste by,
True and siker, courteous, and hend,
And he called was by name a frend,
A truer fellowe was no where none,
In hast to him I went anone,
And to him all my woe I told,
Fro him right nought I would withhold,
I told him all without were,
And made my complaint on Daungere,
How for to see he was hidous,
And to me ward contrarious,
The whiche through his cruelte,
Was in point to have meimed me,
With Bialacoil whan he me sey
Within the gardin walke and pley,
Fro me he made him for to goe,
And I be left alone in woe:
I durst no longer with him speake,
For Daunger sayd he would be wreake,
Whan that he sawe how I went,

The freshe bothum for to hent,
If I were hardie to come nere,
Betweene the haie and the roscere.

This frend when he wist of my thought,
He discomforted me right nought,
But saied, " Fellow, be nat so madde,
Ne so abashed nor bestadde,
My selfe I know full well Daungere,
And how he is fierce of chere,
At prime temps, Love to manace,
Full oft I have beene in his case ;
A felon first though that he be,
After thou shalt him souple see ;
Of long passed I knew him wele,
Ungodly first though men him fele,
He woll meeke after in his bering
Been, for service and obeissing :
I shall thee tell what thou shalt do :
Meekely I rede thou go him to,
Of herte pray him specially
Of thy trespass to have mercy,
And hote him well here to please,
That thou shalt never more him displease :
Who can best serve of flattery,
Shall please Daunger utterly."

My friend hath saied to me so wele,
That he me eased hath somedele,
And eke allegged of my tourment,
For through him had I hardement
Againe to Daunger for to go,
To preve if I might meeke him so.

To Daunger came I all ashauned,
The which afore me had blamed,

Desiring for to pease my wo,
But over hedge durst I not go,
For he forbode me the passage :
I found him cruell in his rage,
And in his hond a great bourdoun,
To him I kneeled low adoun,
Full mecke of port, and simple of chere,
And saied, “ Sir, I am comen here
Onely to aske of you mercy,
It greeveth me full greatly
That ever my life I wrathed you,
But for to amend I am come now,
With all my might, both loud and still,
To doen right at your owne will,
For Love made me for to do
That I have trespassed hiderto,
Fro whom I ne may withdraw mine herte,
Yet shall I never for joy ne smart
(What so befall good or ill)
Offende more againe your will,
Lever I have endure disease,
Than do that should you displease.

“ I you require, and pray that ye
Of me have mercy and pite,
To stint your ire that greveth so,
That I woll sweare for evermo
To be redressed at your liking
If I trespase in any thing,
Save that (I pray thee) graunt me
A thing, that may nat warned be,
That I may love all onely,
None other thing of you aske I :
I shall doen all ywis,
If of your grace ye graunt me this,

And ye may not letten mee,
For well wote ye that love is free :
And I shall loven such that I will,
Whoever like it well or ill :
And yet ne would I not for all Fraunce
Doe thing to do you displeasaunce."

Than Daunger fell in his entent
For to foryeve his male talent,
But all his wrathe yet at last
He hath released, I praide so fast :
" Shortly" (he saied) " thy request
Is not too mokell dishonest,
Ne I woll not werne it thee,
For yet nothing engreeveth mee :
For though thou love thus everinore,
To me is neither soft ne sore :
Love where that thee list, what re'cheth me,
So ferre fro my roses be :
Trust not on me for none assaie,
In any time to passe the haie."

Thus hath he graunted my prayere,
Than went I forth withouten were
Unto my frend, and told him all,
Which was right joyfull of my tale,
(He saied) " Now goeth well thine affaire,
He shall to thee be debonaire,
Though he aforne was dispitous,
He shall hereafter be gracious :
If he were touched on some good veine,
He should yet rewen on thy peine,
Suffer I rede, and no boast make,
Till thou at goodnes maist him take."

By suffraunce, and by wordes soft,
A man may overcome oft
Him that aforne he had in drede,

In bookes soothly as I rede.
Thus hath my friend with great comfort
Avaunced me with high disport,
Which would me good, as much as I :
And than anon full sodainely
I tooke my leave, and streight I went
Unto the haie, for great talent
I had to seene the fresh bothum,
Wherein lay my salvation,
And Daunger tooke keepe, if that I
Keepe him covenant truely ;
So sore I dread his manacing,
I durst not breake his bidding,
For least that I were of him shent,
I brake not his commaundement,
For to purchase his good will,
It was for to come there till,
His mercy was too ferre behind
I kept, for I ne might it find.
I complained and sighed sore,
And languished evermore,
For I durst nat overgo,
Unto the rose I loved so,
Throughout my deming utterly,
That he had knowledge certainly :
Than Love me ladde in such a wise,
That in me there was no feintise,
Falshood, ne no trecherie :
And yet he full of villanie,
Of disdaine, and crueltie,
On me ne would have pitie
His cruell will for to refraine,
Tho I wept alway, and me complaine.

AND while I was in this turment,
Were come of grace, by God sent,
Fraunchise, and with her Pity,
Fulfilde the bothum of bounty :
They go to Daunger anon right
To ferther me with all hir might,
And helpe in worde and in deed,
For well they saw that it was need.

First of her grace dame Fraunchise
Hath taken of this emprise :
She saied, “ Daunger great wrong ye do
To worche this man so much wo,
Or pinen him so angerly,
It is to you great villany :
I cannot see why ne how
That he hath trespassed againe you,
Save that he loveth, wherfore ye shold
The more in charitie of him hold :
The force of love maketh him do this,
Who would him blame he did amis.
He leveth more than he may do,
His paine is hard, ye may see lo :
And love in no wise would consent
That ye have power to repent,
For though that quicke ye would him slo,
Fro love his herte may nat go.

“ Now swete sir, it is your ease
Him for to anger or disease.
Alas, what may it you avaunce
To doen to him so great greavaunce ?
What worship is it againe him take,
Or on your man a werre make,
Sith he so lowly every wise
Is ready, as ye lust devise ?

If Love have caught him in his laas,
You for to beye in every caas,
And been your subject at your will,
Should ye therefore willen him ill ?
Ye shuld him spare more all out,
Than him that is both proud and stout :
Courtesie would that ye succoure
Hem that been meeke under your cure :
His herte is hard that woll not meeke,
Whan men of meekenesse him beseeke.”

“ THIS is certaine,” saied Pitie,
“ We see oft that humilitie,
Both ire, and also felonie
Venquisheth, and also malanchollie,
To stonde forth in such duresse
This crueltie and wickednesse :
Wherefore I pray you, sir Daungere,
For to maintaine no lenger here
Such cruell warre againe your man,
As wholly yours as ever he can,
Nor that ye worchen no more wo
Upon this caitife that languisheth so,
Which woll no more to you trespase,
But put him wholly in your grace :
His offence ne was but lite,
The god of love it was to wite,
That he your thrall so greatly is,
And if ye harme him ye doen amis,
For he hath had full hard pennaunce,
Sith that ye reft him thaquaintaunce
Of Bialacoil, his most joie,
Which all his paines might acoie :
He was before annoyed sore,

But than ye doubled him well more,
For he of blisse hath been full bare,
Sith Bialacoil was fro him fare :
Love hath to him great distresse,
He hath no need of more duresse :
Voideth from him your ire I rede,
Ye may not winnen in this dede,
Maketh Bialacoil repaire againe,
And haveth pitie upon his paine,
For Fraunchise woll, and I Pite,
That mercifull to him ye be,
And sith that she and I accorde,
Have upon him misericorde,
For I you pray, and eke moneste,
Nought to refusen our requeste :
For he is hard and fell of thought,
That for us two woll doe right nought."

Daunger ne might no more endure,
He meeked him unto measure.
" I woll in no wise," saieth Daungere,
" Denie that ye have asked here :
It were too great uncourtesie,
I woll he have the companie
Of Bialacoil, as ye devise,
I woll him let in no wise."

To Bialacoil than went in hie,
Fraunchise, and saied full curteslie :
" Ye have too long be deignous
Unto this lover, and daungerous
Fro him to withdraw your presence,
Which hath do to him great offence,
That ye not would upon him see,
Wherefore a sorrowfull man is hec :
Shape ye to pay him, and to please,

Of my love if ye woll have ease,
Fulfill his will, sith that ye know
Daunger is daunted and brought low
Through helpe of me and of Pite
You dare no more aferde be."

"I shall do right as ye will"
Saieth Bialacoil, "for it is skill,
Sith Daunger woll that it so be :"
Than Fraunchise hath him sent to me.

BIALACAIL at the beginning
Salued me in his comming,
No straungenesse was in him scene,
No more than he had wrathed been,
As faire semblaunt than shewed he me,
And goodly, as aforne did he,
And by the honde without dout,
Within the haie right all about,
He lad me with right good chere,
All environ the vergere,
That Daungere had me chased fro :
Now have I leave over all to go,
Now am I raised at my devise
Fro Hell unto Paradise.
Thus Bialacoil of gentlenesse
With all his paine and businesse,
Hath shewed me onely of grace
The efters of the swote place.

I saw the rose when I was nigh,
Was greater woxen, and more high,
Freshe, roddy, and faire of hew,
Of colour ever iliche new :
And whan I had it long seene,
I saw that through the leaves greene

The rose spread to spannishing,
To seene it was a goodly thing,
But it ne was so sprede on brede,
That men within might know the sede,
For it covert was and close
Both with the leaves and with the rose,
The stalke was even and grene upright,
It was thereon a goodly sight,
And well the better without wene
For the seede was not sene,
Full faire it sprad, the god of blesse,
For such another, as I gesse,
Aforne ne was, ne more vermeile,
I was abawed for marveile,
For ever the fairer that it was,
The more I am bounden in Loves laas.
Long I abode there sooth to say,
Till Bialacoil I gan to pray,
Whan that I saw him in no wise
To me warnen his servise,
That he me would graunt a thing,
Which to remember is well fitting:
This is to saine, that of his grace
He would me yeve leisure and space
To me that was so desirous
To have a kissing precious
Of the goodly fresh rose,
That so sweetly smelleth in my nose,
“For if it you displeased nought,
I woll gladly, as I have sought,
Have a kiss thereof freely
Of your yeft, for certainly
I woll none have but by your leve,
So loth me were you for to greve.”

HE saied, “Frend, so God me spede,
Of Chastitie I have such drede,
Thou shouldest not warned be for me,
But I dare not for Chastite :
Againe her dare I not misdo,
For alway biddeth she me so
To yeve no lover leave to kisse,
For who therto may winnen ywisse,
He of the surplus of the praie
May live in hope to get some day,
For who so kissing may attaine,
Of loves paine hath (sooth to saine)
The best and moste avenaunt,
And earnest of the remenaunt.”

OF his answer I sighed sore,
I durst assay him tho no more,
I had such drede to greve him aye ;
A man shuld not too much assaye
To chafe his friend out of measure,
Nor put his life in aventure ;
For no man at the first stroke
Ne may not fell downe an oke,
Nor of the reisins have the wine,
Till grapes be ripe and well afine,
Be sore empresse, I you ensure,
And drawen out of the pressure :
But I forpeined wonder strong,
Though that I abode right long
And after the kisse, in paine and wo,
Sith I to kisse desired so :
Till that renning on my distresse,
There come Venus the goddessse
(Which aye werrieth Chastite)

Came of her grace to succour me,
Whose might is know ferre and wide,
For she is mother of Cupide,

THE god of Love, blinde as stone,
That helpeth lovers many one.
This lady brought in her right hond
Of brenning fire a blasing brond,
Whereof the flame and hote fire
Hath many a lady in desire
Of love brought, and sore hette,
And in her service her herte is sette.
This lady was of good entayle,
Right wonderfull of apparaile,
By her attire so bright and shene,
Men might perceiue well and sene,
She was not of religioun :
Nor I nill make mentioun
Nor of robe, nor of treasure,
Of broche, neither of her rich attour,
Ne of her girdle about her side,
For that I n'ill not long abide,
But knoweth well, that certainly
She was arraied richely ;
Devoid of pride certaine she was,
To Bialacoil she went apaas,
And to him shortely in a clause
She said : “ Sir, what is the cause
Ye ben of port so daungerous
Unto this lover, and dainous,
To graunt him nothing but a kisse ?
To warne it him ye done amisse,
Sith well ye wot, how that hee
Is Loves servaunt, as ye may see,

And hath beautie, wherthrough he is
Worthy of love to have the blis:
How he is seemely behold and see,
How he is faire, how he is free,
How he is swote and debonaire,
Of age young, lusty, and faire,
There is no lady so hautaine,
Duchesse, countesse, ne chastelaine,
That I nolde hold ungodly,
For to refuse him utterly.

“ His breath is also good and swete,
And eke his lips roddy and mete,
Onely to plaine, and to kiss,
Graunt him a kisse of gentleness.

“ His teeth are also white and clene,
Me thinketh wrong withouten wene,
If ye now warne him, trusteth me,
To graunt that a kisse have he,
The lasse ye helpe him that ye haste,
And the more time shull ye waste.”

Whan the flame of the very brond
That Venus brought in her right hond,
Had Bialacoil with his hete smete,
Anone he bad me withouten lete,
Graunt to me the rose kisse,
Than of my paine I gan to lisse,
And to the rose anon went I,
And kissed it full faithfully:
There need no man aske if I was blith,
Whan the savour soft and lith
Stroke to mine herte without more,
And me allegged of my sore,
So was I full of joy and blisse,
It is faire such a floure to kisse,

It was so swote and saverous,
I might not be so anguishous,
That I mote glad and jolly be,
Whan that I remembre me,
Yet ever among soothly to saine,
I suffer noie and muche paine.

THE see may never be so still,
That with a little wind at will
Overwhelme and tourne also,
As it were wood in wawes go,
After the caline the trouble soone
Mote follow, and chaunge as the Moone.

Right so fareth Love, that selde in one
Holdeth his anker, for right anone
Whan they in ease were best to live,
They ben with tempest all fordrive :
Who serveth Love, can tell of wo,
The stoundmele joy mote overgo,
Now he hurteth, and now he cureth,
For selde in o point Love endureth.

Now is it right me to proceed,
How Shame gan meddle and take heed,
Through whom fell angers I have hade,
And how the strong wall was made,
And the castle of brede and length,
That god of love wan with his strength :
All this romance will I set,
And for no thing ne will I let,
So that it liking to her be,
That is the floure of beaute,
For she may best my labour quite,
That I for her love shall endite.

Wicked Tongue, that the covine

Of every lover can devine
Worst, and addeth more somdele
(For wicked tongue saith never wele)
To me ward bare he right great hate,
Espying me early and late,
Till he hath seene the great chere
Of Bialacoil and me yfere :
He might not his tongue withstonde
Worse to reporte than he fonde,
He was so full of cursed rage ;
It sat him wele of his linage,
For him an irous woman bare ;
His tongue was filed sharpe and square,
Poignaut and right kerving,
And wonder bitter in speaking ;
For whan that he me gan espy,
He swore (affirming sikerly)
Betweene Bialacoil and me
Was evill acquaintaunce and prive :
He spake thereof so folilie,
That he awaked Jelousie,
Which all afraied in his rising,
When that he heard jangling,
He ran anon as he were wood
To Bialacoil there that he stood,
Which had lever in this caas
Have ben at Reines or Amias,
For fote hote in his fellonie,
To him thus said Jelousie :
“ Why hast thou ben so negligent,
To keepen, whan I was absent,
This verger here left in thy ward ?
To me thou haddest no regard,
To trust (to thy confusion)

Him thus, to whom suspicion
 I have right great, for it is nede,
 It is well shewed by the dede.
 Great fault in thee now have I found,
 By God anon thou shalt be bound,
 And faste locken in a toure,
 Without refuite or succoure.

“For Shame too long hath be thee fro,
 Oversoone she was ago,
 Whan thou hast lost both drede and fere,
 It seemed well she was not here,
 She was busie in no wise,
 To keepe thee and chastise,
 And for to helpen Chastite
 To keepe the roser, as thinketh me,
 For then this boy knave so boldly,
 Ne should not have be hardy
 In this verge had such game,
 Which now me turneth to great shame.”

BIALACoil nist what to say,
 Full faine he would have fled away,
 For feare have hid, nere that he
 All suddainly tooke him with me :
 And whan I saw he had so,
 This Jelousie take us two,
 I was astonied, and knew no rede,
 But fled away for very drede.

Then Shame came forth full simply,
 She wende have trespaced full greatly,
 Humble of her port, and made it simple,
 Wearing a vaile in stede of wimple,
 As nonnes done in hir abbey :
 Because her herte was in affray,

She gan to speake within a throw
To Jelousie, right wonder low.

First of his grace she besought,
And said : “ Sir, ne leveth nought
Wicked Tongue, that false espie,
Which is so glad to faine and lie,
He hath you made, through flattering,
On Bialacoil a false leasing :
His falsenesse is not now anew,
It is too long that he him knew :
This is not the first daie,
For Wicked Tongue hath custome aie,
Younge folkes to bewrie,
And false lesings on hem lie.

“ Yet neverthelesse I see among,
That the soigne it is so long
Of Bialacoil, hertes to lure,
In Loves service for to endure,
Drawing suche folke him to,
That he had nothing with to do,
But in soothnesse I trowe nought,
That Bialacoil had ever in thought
To do trespase or villanie,
But for his mother Curtesie
Hath taught him ever to be
Good of acquaintaunce and prive,
For he loveth none heavinesse,
But mirth and play, and all gladnesse ;
He hateth all trechous,
Soleine folke and envious :
For ye weten how that he
Woll ever glad and joyfull be
Honestly with folke to play :
I have be negligent in good fay

To chastise him, therefore now I
Of herte I crie you here mercy,
That I have ben so recheles
To tamen him withouten lees,
Of my folly I me repent,
Now woll I hole set mine entent
To keepe both low and still
Bialacoil to do your will."

"Shame, Shame" (said Jelousy)

"To be bitrashed great drede have I.

"Lecherie hath clombe so hie,
That almost bleared is mine eie,
No wonder is, if that drede have I,
Over all reigneth Lechery,
Whose might groweth night and day,
Both in cloyster and in abbay,
Chastitie is werried over all,
Therefore I woll with siker wall
Close both roses and rosere,
I have too long in this manere
Left hem unclosed wilfully:
Wherefore I am right inwardly
Sorrowfull, and repent me,
But now they shall no lenger be
Unclosed, and yet I drede sore,
I shall repent ferthermore,
For the game goeth all amis,
Counsaile I must new ywis,
I have too long trusted thee,
But now it shall no lenger bee:
For he may best in every cost
Deceive that men trusten most:
I see well that I am nigh shent,
But if I set my full entent

Remedye to purvay :
 Wherefore close I shall the way
 From hem that woll the rose espie.
 And come to wait me villanie,
 For in good faith and in trouth
 I woll not let for no slouth
 To live the more in sikernesse,
 Do make anon a fortresse.
 Than close the roses of good savour ;
 In middes shall I make a tour
 To put Bialacoil in prison,
 For ever I drede me of treason ;
 I trow I shall him keepe so,
 That he shall have no might to go
 About to make compaignie
 To hem that thinke of villanie,
 Ne to no such as hath ben here
 Aforene, and found in him good chere.
 Which han assailed him to shend,
 And with hir trowandise to blend,
 A foole is eith to beguile,
 But may I live a little while,
 He shall forthinke his faire semblaunt."

And with that word came DREDE avaunt,
 Which was abashed, and in great fere,
 Whan he wist Jelousie was there.
 He was for drede in such affray,
 That not a worde durst he say,
 But quaking stood full still alone
 (Till Jelousie his way was gone)
 Save Shame, that him not forsoke,
 Both Drede and she full sore quoke,
 That at last Drede abraide,
 And to his cousin Shame saide.

“ Shame” (he said) “ in soothfastnesse,
To me it is great heavinesse,
That the noise so ferre is go,
And the slaunder of us two :
But sithe that it is befall,
We may it not againe call,
When once sprung is a fame :
For many a yeare withouten blame
We have ben, and many a day,
For many an April and many a May
We han passed, not ashamed,
Till Jelousie hath us blamed
Of mistrust and suspicion
Causelesse, without encheson :
Go we to Daunger hastely,
And let us shew him openly,
That he hath not aright wrought,
Whan that he set not his thought
To keepe better the purprise ;
In his doing he is not wise.
He hath to us do great wrong,
That hath suffred now so long
Bialacoil to have his will
All his lustes to fulfill :
He must amend it utterly,
Or els shall he villanously
Exiled be out of this lond :
For he the warre may not withstond
Of Jelousie, nor the greefe,
Sith Bialacoil is at mischeefe.”

To Daunger, Shame and Drede anon
The right way ben gon :
The chorle they founde hem aforne

Ligging under an hawthorne.
Under his head no pillow was,
But in the stede a trusse of gras :
He slombred, and a nappe he toke,
Till Shame pitously him shoke,
And great manace on him gan make.

“Why sleepest thou when thou shouldwake”
(Quod Shame) “thou dost us villanie,
Who trusteth thee, he doth follie,
To keepe roses or bothums
When they be faire in hir seasons :
Thou art woxe too familiere
Where thou should be straunge of chere,
Stout of thy port, ready to greve :
Thou doest great folly for to leve
Bialacoil here in to call
The yonger man to shenden us all :
Though that thou sleepe, we may here,
Of Jelousie great noise here,
Art thou now late, rise up and hye,
And stop soone and deliverlye
All the gaps of the hay ;
Do no favour I thee pray :
It falleth nothing to thy name,
To make fair semblant, were thou mayst blame.

“If Bialacoil be sweet and free,
Dogged and fell thou shuldest bee,
Froward and outrageous ywis,
A chorle chaungeth that curteis is :
This have I heard oft in saying,
That man may for no daunting
Make a sparhauke of a bosarde :
All men hold thee for musarde,

That debonaire have founden thee,
It sitteth thee nought curteis to bee,
To do men pleasaunce or servise,
In thee it is recreaundise :
Let thy werkes ferre and nere
Be like thy name, which is Daungere.”

Then all abashed in shewing,
Anon spake Drede, right thus saying,
And said, “ Daunger, I drede me,
That thou ne wolt besie be
To keepe that thou hast to keepe,
When thou shuldest wake, thou art asleepe :
Thou shalt be greeved certainly,
If thee asprie Jelousy,
Or if he finde thee in blame.
He hath to day assailed Shame,
And chased away with great manace
Bialacoil out of this place,
And sweareth shortly that he shall
Enclose him in a sturdy wall ;
And all is for thy wickednesse,
For that thee faileth straungenesse ;
Thine herte I trow be failed all ;
Thou shalt repent in speciall,
If Jelousie the soothe knew,
Thou shalt forthinke, and sore rew.”

With that the chorle his clubbe gan shake,
Frowning his eyen gan to make,
And hidous chere, as man in rage,
For ire he brent in his visage :
Whan that he heard him blamed so,
He said, “ Out of my witte I go,
To be discomfite I have great wrong,
Certes, I have now lived too long,

Sith I may not this closer keepe,
All quicke I would be dolven deepe,
If any man shall more repaire
Into this garden for foule or faire,
Mine herte for ire gothe afere,
That I let any entre here,
I have doe folly now I see,
But now it shall amended be,
Who setteth foot here any more,
Truly he shall repent it sore,
For no man more into this place
Of me to enter shall have grace,
Lever I had with swerdes twaine,
Throughout mine herte, in every vaine
Perced to be, with many a wound,
Than slouth should in me be found :
From henceforth by night or day,
I shall defend it if I may
Withouten any exception
Of eache manner condition,
And if I it any man graunt,
Holdeth me for recreaunt."

THEN Daunger on his feet gan stond,
And hent a burdon in his hond,
Wroth in his ire ne left he nought,
But through the verger he hath sought,
If he might find hole or trace,
Where through that me mote forth by pace,
Or any gappe, he did it close,
That no man might touch a rose
Of the roser all about,
He shetteth every man without.

Thus day by day Daunger is wers,

More wonderfull and more divers,
And feller eke than ever he was,
For him full oft I sing alas,
For I ne may nought through his ire
Recover that I most desire ;
Mine herte alas woll brest atwo,
For Bialacoil I wrathed so :
For certainly in every member
I quake, when I me remember
Of the bothum, which I would
Full oft a day seeue and behold,
And when I thinke upon the kisse,
And how muche joy and blisse,
I had through the savour swete,
For want of it I grone and grete :
Me thinketh I fele yet in my nose
The swete savour of the rose,
And now I wote that I mote go
So ferre the fresh floures fro,
To me full welcome were the death,
Absence thereof (alas) me sleeth,
For whylome with this rose, alas,
I touched nose, mouth, and face,
But now the death I must abide ;
But Love consent another tide,
That ones I touch may and kisse,
I trow my paine shall never lisse ;
Thereon is all my covetise,
Which brent my heart in many wise.
Now shall repaire againe sighing,
Long watch on nights, and no sleeping,
Thought in wishing, turment, and wo,
With many a turning to and fro,
That halfe my paine I cannot tell,

For I am fallen into Hell,
From paradise and wealth, the more
My turment greveth more and more,
Annoyeth now the bitternesse,
That I toforne have felt sweetnesse,
And Wicked Tongue, through his falshede,
Causeth all my wo and drede,
On me he lieth a pitous charge,
Because his tongue was too large.

Now it is time shortly that I
Tell you something of Jelousie,
That was in great suspicion :
About him left he no mason,
That stone could lay, ne querroure,
He hired hem to make a tour :
And first the roses for to keepe,
About hem made he a ditch deepe,
Right wonder large, and also brode,
Upon the whiche also stode
Of squared stone a sturdy wall,
Which on a cragge was founded all,
And right great thicknesse eke it bare,
About it was founded square
An hundred fadome on every side,
It was all liche long and wide,
Least any time it were assailed,
Full well about it was battailed,
And round environ eke were set
Full many a rich and faire tournet,
At every corner of this wall
Was set a tour full principall,
And everiche had without fable
A portecullise defensable
To keepe off enemies, and to greve,

That there hir force would preve.

And eke amidde this purprise
Was made a tour of great maistrise,
A fairer saugh no man with sight,
Large and wide, and of great night,
They dradde none assault,
Of ginne, gonne, nor skaffaut,
The temprure of the mortere
Was made of liquour wonder dere
Of quicke lime persaunt and egre,
The which was tempred with vinegre.

The stone was hard of adamaunt,
Whereof they made the foundemaunt,
The toure was round made in compas,
In all this world no richer was,
Ne better ordained therewithall,
About the tour was made a wall,
So that betwixt that and the tour,
Roses were set of sweet savour,
With many roses that they bere,
And eke within the castle were
Springolds, gounes, bowes, and archers,
And eke about at corners
Men seine over the wall stond
Great engines, who were nere hond,
And in the kernels here and there,
Of arblastors great plentie were.
None armour might hir stroke withstond,
It were folly to prease to hond;
Without the diehe were listes made,
With wall battailed large and brade,
For men and horse should not attaine
Too nigh the diehe over the plaine.
Thus Jelousie hath environ

Sette about his garnison
With walles round, and dicke deepe,
Onely the roser for to keepe,
And Daunger early and late
The keyes kept of the utter gate,
The which opened toward the east,
And he had with him at least
Thirtie servants echone by name.

That other gate kept Shame,
Which opened, as it was couth,
Toward the parte of the south,
Sergeaunts assigned were her to
Full many, her will for to do.
Than Drede had in her baillie
The keeping of the constablerie,
Toward the north I understond,
That opened upon the left hond,
The which for nothing may be sure,
But if she doe busie cure
Early on morrow and also late,
Strongly to shette and barre the gate :
Of every thing that she may see,
Drede is aferde, where so she bee,
For with a pufte of little wind,
Drede is astonied in her mind,
Therefore for stealing of the rose,
I rede her nat the yate unclose,
A foules flight would make her flee,
And eke a shaddow if she it see.

THAN Wicked Tongue full of envie,
With souldiours of Normandie,
As he that causeth all debate,
Was keeper of the fourth gate,

And also to the tother three,
He went full ofte for to see.
When his lotte was to walke a night,
His instrumentes would he dight,
For to blowe and make sounes,
Ofter than he hath enchesounes,
And walken oft upon the wall,
Corners and wickettes over all,
Full narrow searchen and espie;
Though he nought fond, yet would he lie
Discordaunt ever fro armonie,
And dissoned from melodie,
Controve he would, and foule faile,
With hornepipes of Cornewaile.
In floytes made he discordaunce,
And in his musicke with mischaunce,
He would seine with notes newe,
That he fond no woman trewe,
Ne that he saw never in his life,
Unto her husbond a trewe wife:
Ne none so full of honeste,
That she nill laugh and merry be,
Whan that she heareth or may espie
A man spoken of lecherie.
Everiche of hem hath some vice,
One is dishonest, another is nice,
If one be full of villanie,
Another with a licorous cie,
If one be full of wantonnesse,
Another is a chideresse.

Thus Wicked tong, God yeve him shame,
Can put hem everichone in blame,
Without desert and causelesse,
He lieth, though they ben guiltlesse;

I have pity to seene the sorrow,
That waketh both even and morrow,
To innocents doth such grevaunce,
I pray God yeve him evill chaunce,
That he ever so busie is,
Of any woman to seine amis.

Eke Jelousie God confound,
That hath made a toure so round,
And made about a garison,
To sette Bialacoil in prison,
The which is shette there in the tour,
Full long to holde there sojour,
There for live in pennaunce,
And for to do him more grevaunce,
Which hath ordained Jelousie,
An olde vecke for to spie
The manner of his governaunce,
The which devill in her enfaunce
Had learned of Loves art,
And of his plays tooke her part,
She was expert in his servise,
She knew each wrenche and every gise
Of love, and every wile,
It was hard her to beguile.

Of Bialacoil she tooke aye hede,
That ever he liveth in wo and drede,
He kept him coy and eke privee,
Least in him she hadde see
Any folly countenance,
For she knew all the old daunce.

And after this, whan Jelousie
Had Bialacoil in his baillie,
And shette him up that was so free,
For sure of him he would bee,

He trusteth sore in his castell,
The strong werke him liketh well,
He dradde nat that no glotons
Should steale his roses or bothoms,
The roses weren assured all
Defenced with the strong wall,
Now Jelousie full well may be
Of drede devoid in liberte,
Whether that he sleepe or wake,
For of his roses may none be take.

BUT I (alas) now mourne shall,
Because I was without the wall,
Full muche dole and mone I made,
Who had wist what wo I hade,
I trow he would have had pite,
Love too deare had solde me
The good that of his love had I,
I went about it all queintly,
But now through doubling of my paine
I see he woll it sell againe,
And me a new bargaine lere,
The which all out the more is dere,
For the sollace that I have lorne,
Than I had it never aforne;
Certaine I am full like indeed
To him that cast in earth his seed,
And hath joy of the new springing,
Whan it greeneth in the ginning,
And is also faire and fresh of flour,
Lustie to seene, swote of odour,
But ere he it in his sheves shere,
May fall a weather that shall it dere,
And make it to fade and fall,

The stalke, the greine, and floures all,
That to the tiller is fordone,
The hope that he had too soone :
I drede certaine that so fare I,
For hope and travaile sikerly
Ben me beraft all with a storme,
The floure nill seden of my corne,
For Love hath so avaunced me,
When I began my privite,
To Bialacoil all for to tell,
Whom I ne found froward ne fell,
But tooke agree all whole my play ;
But Love is of so hard assay,
That all at ones he reved me,
Whan I went best aboven to have be.

It is of Love, as of Fortune,
That chaungeth oft, and will contune,
Which whylome woll of folke smile,
And glombe on hem another while,
Now friend, now foe, shalt her feele,
For a twinckling tourneth her wheele.

She can writhe her head away,
This is the concourse of her play,
She can areise that doeth mourne,
And whirle adoune, and overtourne
Who sitteth highest, but as her lust,
A foole is he that woll her trust,
For it is I that am come down
Through charge and revolution,
Sith Bialacoil mote fro me twin,
Shette in her prison yonde within,
His absence at mine herte I fele,
For all my joy and all mine hele
Was in him and in the rose,

That but you will, which him doeth close,
Open, that I may him see,
Love woll not that I cured bee
Of the paines that I endure,
Nor of my cruell aventure.

AN, Bialacoil mine owne dere,
Though thou be now a prisonere,
Keepe at least thine herte to me,
And suffer nat that it daunted be,
Ne let not Jealousie in his rage,
Putten thine heart in no servage,
Although he chastice thee without,
And make thy bodie unto him lout,
Have herte as hard as Diamant,
Stedfast, and naught pliaunt :
In prison though thy bodie bee
At large keepe thine herte free,
A true herte will not plie
For no manace that it may drie.
If Jelousie doeth thee paine,
Quite him his wile thus againe,
To venge thee at least in thought,
If other way thou maiest nought,
And in this wise subtelly
Worch, and winne the maistrie.
But yet I am in great affray,
Least thou doe nat as I say,
I drede thou canst me great maugre,
That thou emprisoned art for me,
But that nat for my trespass,
For through me never discovered was
Yet thing that ought be secre :
Well more annoie is in me,

Than is in thee of this mischaunce,
For I endure more hard penaunce
Than any can saine or thinke,
That for the sorrow almost I sinke,
Whan I remember me of my wo,
Full nigh out of my witte I go.

Inward mine herte I feelee blede,
For comfortlesse the death I drede,
Owe I nat well to have distresse,
Whan false, through hir wickednesse,
And traitours, that arn envious,
To noien me be so coragious.

Ah, Bialacoil full well I see,
That they hem shape to deceive thee,
To make thee buxom to hir law,
And with hir corde thee to draw
Where so hem lust, right at hir will,
I drede they have thee brought theretill :
Without comfort, the thought me sleeth,
This game would bring me to my death,
For if your good will I lese,
I mote be dead, I may not chese,
And if that thou foryete me,
Mine herte shall never in liking be,
Nor elsewhere find sollace,
If I be put out of your grace,
As it shall never ben I hope,
Than should I fall in wanhope.

Alas, in wanhope, nay parde,
For I woll never dispaired be ;
If Hope me faile, than am I
Ungracious and unworthy ;
In Hope I woll comforted be,
For Love, when he betaught her me,
Saied, that Hope where so I go,

Should aye be relees to my wo.

But what and she my bales bete,
And be to me curteis and swete?
She is in nothing full certaine,
Lovers she put in full great paine,
And maketh hem with wo to dele,
Her faire beheste deceiveth fele,
For she woll behote sikerly,
And failen after utterly.

Ah, that is a full noyous thing,
For many a lover in loving
Hangeth upon her, and trusteth fast,
Which lese hir travaile at the last.

Of thing to commen she wot right nought,
Therefore if it be wisely sought,
Her counsaile follie is to take,
For many times, when she woll make
A full good sillogisme, I drede,
That afterward there shall indede
Follow an evill conclusion,
This put me in confusion.
For many times I have it seene,
That many have beguiled beene,
For trust that they have set in hope,
Which fell hem afterward a slope.

BUT nathellesse yet gladly she would,
That he that woll him with her hold,
Had all times her purpose clere,
Without deceit any where,
That she desireth sikerly;
Whan I her blamed, I did folly;
But what availeth her good will,
Whan she ne may staunch my stound ill,
That helpeth little that she may do,

Or take behest unto my wo :
And heste certaine in no wise,
Without yfete is not to preise.

When heste and deed asunder vary,
They doen a great contrary ;
Thus am I posted up and down
With dole, thought, and confusioun,
Of my desease there is no number,
Daunger and Shame me encumber,
Drede also, and Jelousie,
And Wicked Tongue full of envie,
Of which the sharpe and cruell ire
Full oft me put in great mattire ;
They have my joie fully let,
Sith Bialacoil they have beshet
Fro me in prison wickedly,
Whom I love so entierly,
That it woll my bane bee,
But I the sooner may him see.

And yet moreover worst of all,
There is set to keepe, foule her befall,
A rimpled vecke ferre ronne in rage,
Frowning and yellow in her visage,
Which in await lieth day and night,
That none of him may have a sight.

Now mote my sorrow enforced be,
Full sooth it is, that Love yafe me
Three wonder yestes of his grace,
Which I have lorne, now in this place,
Sith they ne maie without drede
Helpen but little, who taketh hede :
For her availeth no Sweet Thought,
And Sweet Speech helpeth right nought.

The third was called Sweet Looking,
That now is lorne without lesing.

Yeftes were faire, but nat for thy
They helpe me but simply,
But Bialacoil loosed bee
To gone at large and to be free,
For him my life lieth all in dout,
But if he come the rather out.

Alas, I trow it woll nat beene,
For how should I evermore him seene ?
He may nat out, and that is wrong,
Because the toure is so strong,
How should he out, or by whose prowesse
Of so strong a forteresse ?

By me certaine it nill be do,
God wote I have no wit thereto,
But well I wote I was in rage,
When I to Love did homage ;
Who was the cause (in soothfastnesse)
But her selfe dame Idlenesse ?
Which me conveide through faire praiere
To enter into that faire vergere :
She was to blame me to leve,
The which now doeth me sore greve,
A fooles word is nought to trow,
Ne worth an apple for to low,
Men should hem snibbe bitterly,
At prime temps of his folly :
I was a foole, and she me leved,
Through whom I am right nought releved,
She accomplished all my will,
That now me greveth wonder ill.

REASON me saied what should fall,

A foole my selfe I may well call,
That love aside I had not laied,
And trowed that dame Reason saied.
Reason had both skill and right,
When she me blamed with all her might
To meddle of love, that hath me shent,
But certaine now I woll repent.

AND should I repent? Nay parde,
A false traitour then should I be,
The devils engins would me take,
If I Love would forsake,
Or Bialacoil falsly betray.
Should I at mischeefe hate him? nay,
Sith he now for his courtesie
Is in prison of Jelousie;
Courtesie certaine did he me,
So much, that it may not yolden be,
When he the haie passen me lete,
To kisse the rose, faire and swete,
Should I therefore conne him maugre?
Nay certainly, it shall nat be,
For Love shall never (yeve God will)
Here of me, through word or will,
Offence or complaint more or lesse,
Neither of Hope nor Idlenesse:
For certes, it were wrong that I
Hated hem for hir courtesie.
There is not els, but suffer and thinke,
And waken whan I should winke,
Abide in hope, till Love through chaunce
Send me succour or allegeaunce,
Expectaunt aye till I may mete,
To gotten mercie of that swete.

Whilome I thinke how Love to mee
Saied he would take at gree
My service, if unpatience
Caused me to doen offence :
He saied, “ In thanke I shall it take,
And high maister eke thee make,
If wickednesse ne reve it thee,
But soone I trow that shall nat be.”
These were his wordes by and by,
It seemed he loved me truely.

Now is there not but serve him wele,
If that I thinke his thanke to fele,
My good, mine harme, lithe hole in me,
In Love may no default be,
For true Love ne failed never man :
Soothly the faute mote needs than
As God forbide, be found in me,
And how it commeth, I cannot see.
Now let it gone as it may go,
Whether Love woll succour me or slo,
He may do hole on me his will,
I am so sore bound him till,
From his service I may not flene,
For life and death withouten wene
Is in his hond, I may nat chese,
He may me doe both winne and lese,
And sith so sore he doth me greve,
Yet if my lust he would acheve,
To Bialacoil goodly to be,
I yeve no force what fell on me :
For though I die, as I mote nede,
I pray Love of his goodlyhede,
To Bialacoil doe gentlenesse,
For whom I live in such distresse,

That I mote dien for penaunce,
 But first, without repentaunce,
 I woll me confesse in good entent,
 And make in hast my testament,
 As lovers doen that feelen smart :
 To Bialacoil leave I mine herte
 All hole, without departing,
 Or doublenesse of repenting.

COMENT RAISON VIENT A LAMANT.

THUS as I made my passage
 In complaint, and in cruell rage,
 And I not where to finde a leche,
 That couth unto mine helping eche,
 Suddainly againe comen down
 Out of her toure I saw Reason,
 Discreet and wise, and full pleasaunt,
 And of her port full avenaunt ;
 The right waie she tooke to me,
 Which stood in gret perplexite
 That was poshed in every side,
 That I n'ist where I might abide,
 Till she demurely sad of chere
 Saied to me as she came nere,

“ Mine owne friend, art thou greved,
 How is this quarrell yet atcheved
 Of Loves side ? Anone me tell,
 Hast thou not yet of love thy fill ?
 Art thou nat wearie of thy service
 That thee hath in suche wise ?

“ What joy hast thou in thy loving ?
 Is it sweet or bitter thing ?
 Canst thou yet chese, let me see,
 What best thy succour might bee !

“Thou servest a full noble lord,
That maketh thee thrall for thy reward,
Which aye reneweth thy tourment,
With folly so he hath thee blent;
Thou fell in mischeefe thilke day,
When thou diddest the sooth to say
Obeisaunce and eke homage
Thou wroughtest nothing as the sage;
When thou became his liege man,
Thou diddest a great follie than;
Thou wistest nat what fell thereto,
With what lord thou haddest to do,
If thou haddest him well know
Thou haddest nought be brought so low,
For if thou wiste what it were,
Thou n’oldest serve him halfe a yere,
Nat a weeke, nor halfe a day,
Ne yet an houré without delay:
Ne never yloved paramours,
His lordship is so full of shours:
Knowest him ought?”

L’AMAUNT. Ye, dame, parde.

RAISOUN. Nay nay. L’AMAUNT. Yes y.

RAISOUN. Wherefore let see.

L’AMAUNT. Of that he saied I should be
Glad to have such lord as he
And maister of such seignorie.

RAISOUN. Knowest him no more?

L’AMAUNT. Nay, certes, I,
Save that he yafe me rules there,
And went his way I nist where,
And I abode bound in ballaunce,
Lo there a noble cognisaunce.

RAISOUN.

BUT I woll that thou know him now
Ginning and end, sithe that thou
Art so anguishous and mate,
Disfigured out of astate,
There may no wreche have more of wo,
Ne caitife none enduren so,
It were to every man sitting,
Of his lord have knowledging:
For if thou knew him out of dout,
Lightly thou shouldest scapen out
Of thy prison that marreth thee.

LAMAUNT.

YEA dame sith my lord is hee,
And I his man made with mine hond,
I would right faine understand
To knowe of what kind he be,
If any would enforme me.

RAISOUN.

I WOULD (saied Reason) thee lere,
Sith thou to learne hast such desire,
And shewe thee withouten fable
A thing that is not demonstrable;
Thou shalt withouten science,
And know withouten experience
The thing that may not known bee,
Ne wist ne sheweth in no degree,
Thou maiest the sooth of it not witten,
Though in thee it were written,
Thou shalt not knowe thereof more,
While thou art ruled by his lore,

But unto him that love woll flie,
The knotte may unlosed be,
Which hath to thee, as it is found,
So long to knitte and not unbound,
Now set well thine entention,
To heare of love the description.

Love it is an hatefull pees,
A free acquitaunce without relees,
And through the fret full of falshede,
A sikernesse all set in drede,
In herte is a despairing hope,
And full of hope it is wanhope,
Wise woodnesse, and void reasoun,
A swete perill in to droun,
An heavie burthen light to beare,
A wicked wawe away to weare.
It is Carybdis perillous,
Disagreeable and gracious,
It is discordaunce that can accord,
And accordaunce to discord,
It is conning without science,
Wisedome without sapience,
Witte without discretion,
Havoire without possession;
It is like heale and hole sicknesse,
A trust drowned and dronkenesse,
And health full of maladie,
And charitie full of envie,
And anger full of aboundance,
And a greedie suffisaunce,
Delight right full of heavinesse,
And drieried full of gladnesse,
Bitter sweetnesse and sweet errour,

Right evill savoured good savour,
Sin that pardon hath within,
And pardon spotted without sin,
A paine also it is joyous,
And fellonie right pitous,
Also play that selde is stable,
And stedfast right mevable,
A strength weiked to stond upright,
And feeblenesse full of might,
Witte unavised, sage follie,
And joy full of tourmentrie,
A laughter it is weeping aie,
Rest that travaileth night and daie,
Also a sweete Hell it is,
And a sorrowfull Paradis,
A pleasaunt gaile and easie prisoun,
And full of froste summer season,
Prime temps full of frostes white,
And May devoid of all delite,
With seer braunches, blossoms ungrene,
And new fruit filled with winter tene,
It is a slowe may nat forbear,
Ragges ribaned with gold to weare,
For also well woll love be sette
Under ragges as rich rochette,
And eke as well by amorettes
In mourning blacke, as bright burnettes,
For none is of so mokell prise,
Ne no man founden so wise,
Ne none so high of parage,
Ne no man found of witte so sage,
No man so hardie ne so wight,
Ne no man of so mokell might,
None so fulfilled of bounte,

That he with love may daunted be ;
 All the worlde holdeth this way,
 Love maketh all to gone misway,
 But it be they of evill life,
 Whom genius cursed man and wife,
 That wrongly werke againe nature,
 None such I love, ne have no cure
 Of such as loves servaunts beene,
 And woll nat by my counsaile fleene,
 For I ne preise that loving,
 Wherthrough man at the last ending
 Shall call hem wretches full of wo,
 Love greveth hem and shendeth so ;
 But if thou wolt well love eschew,
 For to escape out of his mew,
 And make all whole the sorrow to slake,
 No better counsaile maiest thou take,
 Than thinke to fleen well ywis,
 May nought helpe els : for wite thou this,
 If thou flye it, it shall flye thee,
 Follow it, and followen shall it thee."

LAMAUNT.

WHEN I had heard Reason sain,
 Whiche had spilt her speech in vain :
 " Dame" (sayd I) " I dare well say
 Of this avaunt me well I may
 That from your schoole so deviaunt
 I am, that never the more avaunt
 Right nought am I through your doctrine,
 I dull under your discipline,
 I wote no more than wist ever
 To me so contrarie and so fer
 Is everie thing that ye me lere,

And yet I can it all by paruere :
Mine herte foryeteth thereof right nought,
It is so writen in my thought,
And deepe graven it is so tender
That all by herte I can it render,
And rede it over communely,
But to my selfe lewdest am I.

BUT sith ye love discriven so
And lacke and preise it bothe two
Defineth it into this letter,
That I may thinke on it the better :
For I heard never defined here,
And wilfully I would it lere."

" If love be searched well and sought
It is a sicknesse of the thought
Annexed and knedde betwixt tweine,
With male and female with o cheine,
So freely that bindeth, yet they n'll twinne,
Wheder so thereof they lese or winne :
The roote springeth through hot brenning
Into disordinate desiring,
For to kissen and embrace,
And at hir lust them to solace,
Of other thing love retcheth nought
But setteth hir herte and all hir thought,
More for delectatioun
Than any procreatioun
Of other fruit by engendrure :
Which love, to God is not pleasure,
For of hir body fruit to get
They yeve no force, they are so set
Upon delight to play in fere.
And some have also this manere,

To fainen hem for love seke,
Such love I preise not at a leke.
For paramours they doe but faine,
To love truely they disdaine,
They falsen ladies traitorously,
And swerne hem othes utterly,
With many a leasing, and many a fable,
And all the finden deceivable.

“ And when they han hir lust gotten
The hote ernes they all foryetten ;
Women the harme buyen full sore :
But men thus thinken evermore,
The lasse harne is, so mote I thee,
Deceive them, than deceived be.
And namely where they ne may
Finde none other meane way :
For I wote well in soothfastnesse,
That who doeth now his businesse
With any woman for to dele,
For any lust that he may fele,
But if it be for engendrure,
He doth trespasse I you ensure :
For he should setten all his will
To gotten a likely thing him till,
And to sustaine, if he might,
And keepe forth by Kindes right
His owne likenesse and semblable :
For because all is corruptable
And faile should succession
Ne were there generation,
Our sectes sterne for to save,
Whan father or mother arn in grave,
Her children should, whan they been dead,
Full diligent been in hir stead

To use that worke on such a wise,
That one may through another rise.
Therefore set Kinde therein delight,
For men therein should hem delight,
And of that deede be not erke,
But ofte sithes haunt that werke :
For none would draw thereof a draught
Ne were delight, which hath hem caught,
This had subtill dame Nature :
For none goeth right I thee ensure
Ne hath entent hoole ne perfite,
For hir desire is for delite,
The which fortene crease and eke
The play of love, for oft seeke
And thrall hem selfe they be so nice
Unto the prince of everie vice :
For of each sinne it is the roote
Unlesfull lust, though it be soote,
And of all evill the racine,
As Tullius can determine,
Which in his time was full sage,
In a booke he made of age,
Where that more he praiseth Elde
Though he be crooked and unwelde,
And more of commendatioun,
Than youth in his discription :
For youth set bothe man and wife
In all perill of soule and life,
And perill is, but men have grace.
The perill of youth for to pace,
Without any death or distresse,
It is so full of wildnesse,
So oft it doeth shame and damage
To him or to his linage,

It leadeth man, now up now down
In mokell dissolutioun,
And maketh him love evill companie,
And lead his life disrulilie,
And halt him payd with none estate
Within himselfe in such debate,
He chaungeth purpose and entent,
And yalte into some covent,
To liven after hir emprise,
And leeseth freedome and fraunchise,
That nature in him had set,
The which againe he may not get,
If he there make his mansion,
For to abide profession.
Though for a time his herte absent
It may not faile, he shall repent,
And eke abide thilke day,
To leave his abite, and gone his way,
And leaseth his worship and his name,
And dare not come againe for shame,
But all his life he doth so mourne,
Because he dare not home retourne,
Freedome of kinde so lost hath he
That never may recured be,
But that if God him graunt grace
That he may, er he hence pace,
Conteine under obedience
Through the vertue of patience.
For youth set man in all follie,
In unthrift and in ribaudrie,
In lecherie, and in outrage,
So oft it chaungeth of courage.
Youth ginneth oft suche bargaine,
That may not ende without paine.

In great perill is set youthhede
Delight so doeth his bridell lede,
Delight this hangeth, drede thee nought,
Both mannes bodie and his thought,
Onely through youthes chambere,
That to doen evill is customere,
And of naught else taketh hede,
But onely folkes for to lede
Into disport and wildenesse,
So is froward from sadnesse,
But elde draweth hem therefro,
Who wote it not, he may well go,
And mo of them, that now arn old,
That whilom youth had in hold,
Which yet remembreth of tender age
How it him brought in many a rage,
And many a follie therein wrought:
But now that elde hath him through sought
They repent hem of hir follie,
That youth hem put in jeopardie,
In perill and in muche woe,
And made hem oft amisse to doe,
And sewen evill companie
Riot and advoutrie.

But elde gan againe restraine
From such follie, and refraine
And set men by her ordinaunce,
In good rule and governaunce,
But evil she spendeth her servise,
For no man woll her love, neither preise,
She is hated, this wote I wele,
Her acquaintance would no man fele,
Ne han of elde companie,

Men hate to be of her alie,
For no man would becommen old,
Ne die, when he is young and bold,
And elde marvaileth right greatly,
When they remember hem inwardly
Of many a perillous emprise
Which that they wrought in sundry wise,
However they might without blame
Escape awaie without shame,
In youth without damage
Or reprefe of her lineage,
Losse of member, shedding of blood,
Perill of death, or losse of good.
Wost thou nat where youth abit,
That men so preisen in hir wit?
With Delight she halt sojour,
For both they dwellen in o tour,
As long as youth is in season,
They dwellen in one mansion :
Delight, of youth woll have servise
To doe what so he woll devise,
And youth is readie evermore
For to obey, for smert or sore,
Unto Delight, and him to yeve
Her servise, while that she may live.

“ Where elde abitte, I woll thee tell
Shortly, and no while dwell,
For thider behoveth thee to go
If death in youth thee not slo :
Of this journey thou mayst not faile,
With her Labour and Travaile,
Lodged been with Sorrow and Wo,
That never out of her court go :
Paine and Distresse, Sickennesse, and Ire,

And Melancholly that angrie sire,
Ben of her paleis senatours,
Groning and grutching, her herbegeours,
The day and night her to tourment
With cruell death they her present,
And tellen her erlich and late
That Death stondeþ armed at her gate :
Than bring they to her remembraunce
The folly deedes of her enfaunce,
Which causen her to mourne in wo
That youth hath her beguiled so
Which sodainly away is hasted,
She weeped the time that she hath wasted.
Complaining of the preteritte,
And the present, that nat abitte.
And of her olde vanitee
That but aforne her she may see,
In the future some succour,
To leggen her of her dolour
To graunt her time of repentaunce,
For her sinnes to doe penaunce,
And at the last so her governe
To winne the joy that is eterne,
Fro which goe backward youth he made
In vanitie to drowne and wade,
For present time abideth nought,
It is more swift than any thought,
So little while it doth endure
That there n'is compte ne measure.

“ But how that ever the game go
Who list to love joy and mirth also
Of love, be it he or she,
Hie or lowe who it be,
In fruite they should hem delite,

Hir part they may not else quite,
To save hem selfe in honeste,
And yet full many one I see
Of women, soothly for to saine,
That desire and would faine
The play of love, they be so wilde
And not covet to go with childe :
And if with childe they be perchaunce,
They woll it hold a great mischaunce,
But whatsoever woe they fele,
They woll not plaine, but concele,
But if it be any foole or nice,
In whome that shame hath no justice,
For to delight each one they draw,
That haunt this worke both hie and law,
Save such that arn worth right nought,
That for money woll be bought,
Such love I preise in no wise,
Whan it is given for covetise ;
I praise no woman, though she be wood
That yeveth her selfe for any good :
For little should a manne tell
Of her, that will her bodie sell,
Be she maide, be she wife,
That quicke woll sell her by her life,
How faire chere that ever she make,
He is a wretch I undertake
That loved such one, for sweete or soure,
Though she him called her paramoure,
And laugheth on him, and maketh him feast,
For certainly no suche beast
To be loved is not worthie
Or beare the name of Druerie,
None should her please, but he wer wood,

That woll dispoile him of his good :
Yet nathelesse I woll not say
That she for solace and for play,
May a jewell or other thing
Take of her loves free yeving :
But that she aske it in no wise,
For drede of shame or covetise.
And she of hers may him certaine
Without slaunder yeven againe,
And joyne hir hearts together so
In love, and take and yeve also.
Trow not that I woll hem twinne,
When in hir love there is no sinne,
I woll that they together go,
And done all that they han ado,
As curtes should and debonaire,
And in hir love beren hem faire,
Without vice, both he and she,
So that alway in honeste,
Fro folly Love to keepe hem clere
That brenneth hertes with his fere,
And that hir love in any wise,
Be devoide of covetise.
Good love should engendred be
Of true herte, just, and secree,
And not of such as set hir thought
To have hir lust, and else nought :
So are they caught in Loves lace,
Truly for bodily solace,
Fleshy delighte is so present
With thee, that set all thine entent,
Without more, what should I glose,
For to get and have the rose,
Which maketh thee so mate and wood

That thou desirest none other good ;
But thou art not an inch the nerre,
But ever abidest in sorrow and werre,
As in thy face it is seene,
It maketh thee both pale and leene,
Thy might, thy vertue goeth away :
A sorry guest (in good fay)
Thou harbourest in thine inne
The god of love whan thou let inne :
Wherefore I read thou shette him out,
Or he shall greve thee out of dout,
For to thy profite it woll tourne,
If he no more with thee sojourne.
In great mischiefe and sorrow sonken,
Ben hertes, that of love arn drunken,
As thou peraventure knowen shall,
When thou hast lost the time all,
And spent thy thought in idlenesse,
In waste, and wofull lustinesse :
If thou maiest live the time to see
Of love for to delivered bee,
Thy time thou shalt beweepe sore
The which never thou mayest restore :
For time lost, as men may see,
For nothing may recovered bee,
And if thou scape, yet at last,
Fro Love that hath thee so fast
Knitte and bounden in his lace,
Certaine I hold it but a grace,
For many one as it is seine
Have lost, and spent also in veine
In his servise without succour
Bodie and soule, good, and treasour,
Wit, and strength, and eke richesse,

Of which they had never redresse.

LAMANT.

THUS taught and preached hath Reason,
But Love spilte her sermon,
That was so impd in my thought,
That her doctrine I set at nought,
And yet ne sayd she never a dele,
That I ne understood it wele,
Word by word the matter all,
But unto Love I was so thrall,
Which calleth over all his praie,
He chaseth so my thought aie,
And holdeth mine herte under his sele,
As trustie and true as any stele :
So that no devotion
Ne had I in the sermon
Of dame Reason, ne of her rede
I tooke no sojour in mine hede.
For all yede out at one ere
That in that other she did lere,
Fully on me she lost her lore
Her speech me greeved wonder sore.

THAT unto her for ire I said
For anger, as I did abraid :
“ Dame, and is it your will algate,
That I not love, but that I hate
All men, as ye me teach,
For if I doe after your speach,
Sith that you seine love is not good,
Than must I nedes say with mood
If I it lefe, in hatred aie
Liven, and voide love awaie,

From me a sinfull wretch,
 Hated of all that tetch,
 I may not go none other gate,
 For either must I love or hate,
 And if I hate men of new,
 More than love it woll me rew,
 As by your preching seemeth mee,
 For love nothing ne praiseth thee :
 Ye yeve good counsaile sikerly
 That precheth me all day, that I
 Should not loves lore alowe,
 He were a foole woulde you not trowe ?
 In speech also ye han me taught,
 Another love that knowne is naught
 Which I have heard you not reprove,
 To love each other by your leve,
 If ye would diffine it mee,
 I would gladly here to see,
 At the least if I may lere
 Of sundrie loves the manere.”

RAISON.

“ CERTES friend, a foole art thou
 Whan that thou nothing wilt allow
 That I for thy profite say :
 Yet woll I say thee more in fay,
 For I am readie at the leest,
 To accomplish thy request,
 But I not where it woll availe,
 In vaine peraventure I shall travaile :
 Love there is in sundrie wise,
 As I shall thee here devise.

“ For some love lefull is and good,
 I meane not that which maketh thee wood,

And bringeth thee in many a fitte,
 And ravisheth fro thee all thy witte,
 It is so marvailous and queint,
 With such love be no more aquaint.

COMMENT RAISON DIFFINIST AUNSETE.

“ LOVE of friendship also there is
 Which maketh no man done amis,
 Of will knitte betwixt two,
 That woll not breake for wele ne wo,
 Which long is likely to contune,
 Whan will and goods been in commune,
 Grounded by Gods ordinaunce,
 Hoole without discordaunce,
 With hem holding commaunce
 Of all her good in charite,
 That there be none exceptioun,
 Through chaunging of ententioun,
 That each helpe other at her nede,
 And wisely hele both word and dede,
 True of meaning, devoide of slouth,
 For wit is nought without trouth :
 So that the tone dare all his thought
 Saine to his friend, and spare nought,
 As to himselfe without dreding,
 To be discovered by wreyng,
 For glad is that conjunction,
 Whan there is none suspicion,
 Whom they would prove
 That true and perfite weren in love :
 For no man may be amiable,
 But if he be so firme and stable,
 That fortune change him not ne blinde,
 But that his friend alway him finde,

Both poore and riche in o state :
For if his friend through any gate,
Woll complaine of his poverté,
He should not bide so long, till he
Of his helping him require,
For good deed done through praier
Is sold and bought too deere ywis
To herte that of great valour is.
For herte fulfilled of gentlenesse,
Can evill demeane his distresse.
And man that worthy is of name,
To asken often hath great shame.

“ A good man brenneth in his thought,
For shame when he asketh ought,
He hath great thought, and dredeth aie
For his disease when he shall praie
His friend, least that he warned be
Till that he preve his stabilitie :
But when that he hath founden one
That trustie is and true as stone,
And assayed him at all,
And found him stedfast as a wall,
And of his friendship be certaine,
He shall him shew both joy and paine,
And all that he dare thinke or say,
Without shame, as he well may,
For how should he ashamed be,
Of such one as I told thee ?
For whan he wote his secret thought,
The third shall know thereof right nought,
For twey in number is bet than three,
In everie counsaile and secree :
Repreve he dredeth never a dele,
Who that beset his wordes wele,

For everie wise man out of drede,
Can keepe his tongue till he see nede.

“ And fooles cannot hold hir tongue,
A fooles bell is soone ronge,
Yet shall a true friend doe more
To helpe his fellow of his sore,
And succour him whan he hath need
In all that he may done indeed,
And gladder that he him pleaseth
Than his felowe that he easeth,
And if he doe not his request,
He shall as muche him molest
As his felowe, for that he
May not fulfill his volunte
Fully, as he hath required ;
If both the hertes love hath fired
Joy and woe they shall depart,
And take evenly each his part,
Halfe his annoy he shall have aie,
And comforte what that he may,
And of this blisse part shall he,
If love woll departed be.

AND whilom of this unitie
Spake Tullius in a ditie,
And should maken his request
Unto his friend, that is honest,
And he goodly should it fulfill,
But it the more were out of skill,
And otherwise not graunt thereto,
Except onely in causes two.

“ If men his friend to death would drive
Let him be busie to save his live.

“ Also if men wollen hem assaile,

Of his worship to make him faile
And hindren him of his renoun,
Let him with full ententioun,
His dever done in each degree
That his friend ne shamed be.

“ In this two case with his might,
Taking no keepe to skill nor right,
As farre as love may him excuse,
This ought no manne to refuse.

“ This love that I have told to thee
Is nothing contrarie to mee,
This woll I that thou follow wele,
And leave the other everie dele,
This love to vertue all attendeth,
The tother fooles blent and shendeth.

“ Another love also there is,
That is contrarie unto this,
Which desire is so constrained
That is but will fained ;
Away fro trouth it doth so varie
That to good love it is contrarie ;
For it maymeth in many wise
Sicke hertes with covetise ;
All in winning and in profite,
Such love setteth his delite :
This love so hangeth in balaunce
That if it lese his hope perchaunce,
Of lucre, that he is set upon,
It woll faile, and quench anon,
For no man may be amorous,
Ne in his living vertuous,
But he love more in mood
Men for hem selfe than for hir good :
For love that profite doth abide,

Is false, and hideth not in no tide.
Love commeth of dame Fortune,
That little while woll contune,
For it shall chaungen wonders soone,
And take eclips as the Moone
Whan she is from us let
Through Earth, that betwixt is set
The Sunne and her, as it may fall,
Be it in partie, or in all;
The shadow maketh her beames merke,
And her hornes to shew derke,
That part where she hath lost her light
Of Phebus fully, and the sight,
Till whan the shadow is overpast,
She is enlumined againe as fast,
Through the brightnesse of the sun beames
That yeveth to her againe her leames :
That love is right of such nature,
Now is faire, and now obscure,
Now bright, now clipsey of manere,
And whilom dimme, and whilom clere,
Assoone as poverte ginneth take,
With mantell and weedes blake
Hideth of love the light away,
That into night it tourneth day,
It may not see richesse shine,
Till the blacke shadowes fine,
For whan richesse shineth bright
Love recovereth ayen his light,
And whan it faileth, he woll flit,
And as she greeveth, so greeveth it.

“ Of this love heare what I saie :
The riche men are loved aie,
And namely tho that sparand beene,

That woll not wash hir hertes cleene
Of the filth, nor of the vice
Of greedy brenning avarice.

“ The rich man full fond is ywis,
That weneth that he loved is,
If that his herte it understood,
It is not he, it is his good,
He may well weten in his thought,
His good is loved, and he right nought :
For if he be a niggard eke,
Men would not set by him a leke,
But haten him, this is the sooth,
Lo what profite his cattell dooth,
Of every man that may him see,
It getteth him nought but enmitee :
But he amend himselfe of that vice,
And know himselfe, he is not wise.

“ Certes he should aye friendly be,
To get him love also been free,
Or else he is not wise ne sage
No more than is a gote ramage.
That he not loveth, his deede proveth,
Whan he his richesse so well loveth,
That he woll hide it aie and spare,
His poore friends seene forfare
To keepen aie his purpose
Till for drede his eyen close,
And till a wicked death him take
Him had lever asunder shake,
And let all his limmes asunder rive,
Than leave his richesse in his live ;
He thinketh to part it with no man,
Certaine no love is in him than :
How should love with him be,

Whan in his herte is no pite ?
That he trespasseth well I wate,
For each man knoweth his estate,
For well him ought to be reproved
That loveth nought, ne is not loved.

“ But sith we arn to Fortune comen,
And hath our sermon of her nomen,
A wonder will I tell thee now,
Thou hardest never such one I trow ;
I n’ot where thou me leven shall,
Though soothfastnesse it be all,
As it is written, and is sooth
That unto men more profite dooth
The froward Fortune and contraire,
Than the swote and debonaire :
And if they thinke it is doutable,

It is through argument provable,
For the debonaire and soft
Falseth and beguileth oft,
For lich a mother she can cherish
And milken as doth a norice,
And of her good to him deles
And yeveth him part of her jeweles,
With great riches and dignitie,
And hem she hoteth stabilitie,
In state that is not stable,
But changing aie and variable,
And feedeth him with glorie vaine,
And worldly blisse none certaine,
Whan she him setteth on her whele,
Than wene they to be right wele,
And in so stable state withall
That never they wene for to fall,
And when they set so high to be,

They wene to have in certainte
Of heartly friendes to great numbre,
That nothing might hir state encombre,
They trust hem so on everie side,
Wening with hem they would abide,
In everie perill and mischaunce
Without chaunge or variaunce,
Both of cattell and of good,
And also for to spend hir blood,
And all hir members for to spill
Onely to fulfill hir will,
They maken it whole in many wise
And hoten hem hir full servise
How sore that it doe hem smert,
Into hir very naked shert,
Herte and also hole they yeve,
For the time that they may live,
So that with hir flatterie,
They maken fooles glorifie
Of hir wordes speaking,
And han chere of a rejoysing,
And trow them as the Evangile,
And it is all falshede and gile,
As they shall afterward see,
Whan they arn full in povertie,
And ben of good and cattell bare,
Than should they seene who friendes ware.
For of an hundred certainly,
Nor of a thousand full scarcely,
Ne shall they finde unnethes one,
Whan povertie is commen upon.

“ For thus Fortune that I of tell,
With men whan her lust to dwell,
Maketh hem to lese hir conisaunce,

And nourisheth hem in ignoraunce.

“ But froward Fortune and perverse,
When high estates she doth reverse,
And maketh hem to tumble doune
Off her whele with sodaine tourne,
And from her richesse doth hem flie,
And plungeth hem in povertie,
As a stepmother envious,
And layeth a plaister dolorous,
Unto hir hertes wounded egre,
Which is not tempered with vinegre,
But with povertie and indigence,
For to shew by experience,
That she is Fortune verilie
In whome no man should affie,
Nor in her yestes have fiaunce,
She is so full of variaunce.

“ Thus can she maken hye and lowe,
Whan they from richesse arn throwe,
Fully to knowen without were
Friend of effect, and friend of chere,
And which in love weren true and stable,
And which also weren variable,
After Fortune hir goddesse,
In povertie, either in richesse,
For all that yeveth here out of drede,
Unhappe beareth it indeede,
For infortune let not one
Of friendes, whan Fortune is gone,
I meane tho friendes that woll fle
Anone as entreth poverte,
And yet they woll not leave hem so,
But in each place where they go
They call hem wretch, scorne and blame,

And of hir mishappe hem diffame,
And namely such as in richesse,
Pretendeth most of stablenesse
Whan that they saw hem set on loft,
And weren of hem succoured oft,
And most yholpe in all hir need :
But now they take no maner heed,
But saine in voice of flatterie,
That now appeareth hir follic,
Over all where so they fare,
And sing, Go farewell felde fare.

“ All such friendes I beshrew,
For of true there be too few,
But soothfast friendes, what so betide,
In every fortune wollen abide,
They han hir hertes in such noblesse
That they nill love for no richesse,
Nor for that Fortune may hem send
They wollen hem succour and defend,
And chaunge for softe ne for sore ;
For who his friend loveth evermore
Though men draw sword him to slo,
He may not hew hir love a two :
But in case that I shall say,
For pride and ire lese it he may,
And for reproove by nicete,
And discovering of privite,
With tongue wounding, as felon,
Through venemous detraction.

“ Friend in this case will gone his way,
For nothing grieve him more ne may,
And for nought else woll he fle,
If that he love in stabilitie.
And certaine he is well begone

Among a thousand that findeth one :
For there may be no richesse,
Ayenst friendship of worthinesse,
For it ne may so high attaine,
As may the valour, sooth to saine,
Of him that loveth true and well.
Friendship is more than is cattell,
For friend in court aie better is
Than penny in purse certis,
And Fortune mis-happing,
Whan upon men she is fabling,
Through misturning of her chaunce,
And cast hem out of balaunce.

“ She maketh through her adversite
Men full clerely for to see
Him that is friend in existence
From him that is by appearence :
For infortune maketh anone,
To know thy friendes fro thy fone,
By experience, right as it is,
The which is more to praise ywis,
Than in much richesse and treasour,
For more deepe profite and valour,
Povertie, and such adversitie
Before, than doth prosperitie,
For that one yeveth conisaunce,
And the tother ignoraunce.

“ And thus in povertie is indeed
Trough declared fro falshede,
For faint friendes it woll declare,
And true also, what way they fare.
For whan he was in his richesse,
These friendes full of doublenesse
Offred him in many wise

Herte and body, and service,
What wold he than have you to have bought,
To knowen openly hir thought,
That he now hath so clerely seen ?
The lasse beguiled he should have been,
And he had than perceived it,
But richesse n'old not let him wit :
Well more avautage doeth him than,
Sith that he maketh him a wise man,
The great mischief that he perceiveth
Than doeth richesse that him deceiveth :
Richesse rich ne maketh nought
Him that on treasour set his thought,
For richesse stont in suffisaunce,
And nothing in aboundaunce :
For suffisaunce all onely
Maketh menne to live richly.

For he that hath mitches tweine,
Ne value in his demeine,
Liveth more at ease, and more is rich,
Than doeth he that is chich,
And in his barne hath sooth to saine,
An hundred mavis of wheat graine,
Though he be chapman or marchaunt,
And have of gold many besaunt :
For in getting he hath such wo,
And in the keeping drede also,
And set evermore his businesse
For to encrease, and not to lesse,
For to augment and multiply,
And though on heapes that lye him by,
Yet never shall make his richesse,
Asseth unto his greedinesse :

But the poore that retcheth nought,
Save of his livelode in his thought,
Which that he getteth with his travaile,
He dredeth nought that it shall faile,
Though he have little worldes good,
Meate and drinke, and easie food,
Upon his travaile and living,
And also suffisaunt clothing,
Or if in sickennesse that he fall,
And loath meat and drinke withall,
Though he have not his meat to buy,
He shall bethinke him hastely,
To put him out of all daungere,
That he of meat hath no mistere,
Or that he may with little eke
Be founden, while that he is seke,
Or that men shull him berne in hast,
To live till his sickennesse be past,
To some maisondewe beside,
He cast nought what shall him betide,
He thinketh nought that ever he shall
Into any sickennesse fall.

AND though it fall, as it may be,
That all betime spare shall he
As mokell as shall to him suffice,
While he is sicke in any wise,
He doeth for that he woll be
Content with his poverte
Without neede of any man,
So much in little have he can,
He is apaide with his fortune,
And for he nill be importune
Unto no wight, ne onerous,

Nor of hir goodnesse covetous :
Therefore he spareth, it may well been,
His poore estate for to susteen.

Or if him lust not for to spare,
But suffereth forth, as not yet ware,
At last it happeneth, as it may
Right unto his laste day,
And take the world as it would be :
For ever in herte thinketh he
The sooner that Death him slo,
To paradise the sooner go
He shall, there for to live in blisse
Where that he shall no good misse :
Thider he hopeth God shall him send
After this wretched lives end.

Pythagoras himselfe rehearses
In a booke that the Golde Verses
Is cleped, for the nobilite
Of the honourable dite :
' Than whan thou goest thy body fro,
Free in the ayre thou shalt up go
And leaven all humanitie,
And purely live in deitie,
He is a foole withouten were
That troweth have his countrey here.'

" In yearth is not our countrey,
That may these clarkes seine and sey
In Boece of Consolation
Where it is maked mention
Of our countrey plaine at the cie,
By teaching of philosophie,
Where lewd men might lere wit,
Who so that would translaten it.

If he be such that can well live
After his rent, may him yeve,
And not desireth more to have,
Than may fro povertie him save.
A wise man saied, as we may seen,
Is no man wretched, but he it ween,
Be he king, knight, or ribaude,
And many a ribaud is merrie and baude,
That swinketh, and beareth both day and night
Many a burthen of great might,
The which doeth him lasse offence,
For he suffreth in patience :
They laugh and daunce, trippe and sing,
And lay nought up for hir living,
But in the taverne all dispendeth
The winning that God hem sendeth ;
Than goeth he fardels for to beare,
With as good chere as he did eare ;
To swinke and travaile he not faineth,
For to robben he disdaineth,
But right anon, after his swinke,
He goeth to taverne for to drinke :
All these are rich in aboundance,
That can thus have suffisance
Well more than can an usurere,
As God well knoweth, without were.
For an usurer, so God me see,
Shall never for richesse riche bee,
But evermore poore and indigent,
Scarce, and greedy in his entent.

“ For sooth it is, whom it displease,
There may no marchaunt live at ease,
His herte in such a were is set
That it quicke brenneth to get,

Ne never shall, though he hath gotten,
Though he have gould in garners yeten,
For to be needy he dredeth sore :
Wherefore to gotten more and more
He set his herte and his desire ;
So hote he brenneth in the fire
Of covetise, that maketh him wood
To purchase other mennes good ;
He underfongeth a great paine,
That undertaketh to drinke up Saine :
For the more he drinketh aie
The more he leaveth, the sooth to say :
Thus is thirst of false getting,
That last ever in coveting,
And the anguish and distresse
With the fire of greedinesse ;
She fighteth with him aie, and striveth,
That his herte asunder riveth,
Such greedinesse him assaileth,
That when he most bath, most he faileth.

“ Phisitions and advocates
Gone right by the same yates,
They sell hir science for winning,
And haunt hir craft for great getting :
Hir winning is of such sweetnesse,
That if a man fall in sicknesse,
They are full glad, for hir encrease :
For by hir will, without lease,
Everich man shoulde be seeke,
And though they die, they set not a leeke ;
After whan they the gould have take,
Full little care of hem they make ;
They would that fortie were sicke at ones,
Yea two hundred, in flesh and bones,

And yet two thousand, as I gesse,
For to encreasen hir richesse.

“They woll not worchen in no wise,
But for lucre and covetise,
For physicke ginneth first by (phy)
The phisition also soothly,
And sithen it goeth fro fie to fie,
To trust on hem it is follie,
For they n’ill in no manner gree,
Doe right nought for charitee.
Eke in the same sect are set
All tho that preachen for to get
Worships, honour, and richesse.
Hir hertes arm in great distresse,
That folke live not holily,
But aboven all specially,
Such as preachen vaine glorie
And toward God have no memorie,
But forth as ipoerites trace,
And to hir soules death purchase
And outward shewing holynesse,
Though they be full of cursednesse,
Nor lyche to the apostles twelve,
They deceive other and hem selve :
Beguiled is the guiler than,
For preaching of a cursed man
Though to other may profite
Himself it availeth not a mite :
For oft good predicioun
Commeth of evil ententioun :
To him not vaileth his preaching
All helpe he other with his teaching,
For where they good example take,
There is he with vaine glory shake.

“ But let us leaven these preachours,
And speake of hem which in hir tours
Heape up hir gould, and fast shet,
And sore thereon their herte set :
They neither love God ne drede,
They keepe more than it is nede,
And in hir bagges sore it bind
Out of the sunne, and of the wind :
They put up more than need ware,
Whan they seen poore folke forfare,
For hunger die, and for cold quake ;
God can wel vengeance therof take ;
The great mischiefes hem assaileth,
And thus in gadering aye travaileth ;
With muche paine they winne richesse,
And drede hem holdeth in distresse,
To keepe that they gather fast,
With sorrow they leave it at the last :
With sorrow they both die and live,
That unto richesse her hertes yeve.
And in defaute of love it is,
As it sheweth full well ywis :
For if these greedy, the sooth to saine,
Loveden, and were loved againe,
And good love raigned over all,
Such wickednesse ne should fall,
But he should yeve, that most good had
To hem that weren in neede bestad,
And live without false usure,
For charitic, full cleane and pure :
If they’ hem yeve to goodnesse,
Defending hem from idlenesse,
In all this world than poore none
We should finde, I trow not one :

But chaunged is this world unstable,
For love is over all vendable.

“ We see that no man loveth now
But for winning and for prow,
And love is thralld in servage
Whan it is sold for advantage ;
Yet women woll hir bodies sell :
Such soules goeth to the Divell of Hell.”

When Love had told hem his entent,
The baronage to counsaile went,
In many sentences they fill,
And diversly they said hir will :
But after discord they accorded,
And hir accord to Love recorded :
“ Sir,” sayden they, “ we been at one,
By even accord of everichone,
Outtake Richesse all onely
That sworne hath full hauteinly,
That she the castle n’ill not assaile,
Ne smite a stroke in this battaile,
With dart, ne mace, speare, ne knife,
For man that speaketh and beareth the life,
And blameth your emprise ywis,
And from our host departed is,
At least waie, as in this plite,
So hath she this man in dispite :
For she sayth he ne loved her never,
And therefore she woll hate him ever ;
For he woll gather no treasure,
He hath her wrathe for evermore ;
He agilte her never in other caas,
Lo here all hooly his trespas.
She sayeth well, that this other day
He asked her leave to gone the way

That is cleped too much yeving,
And spake full faire in his praying :
But whan he prayed her, poore was he,
Therefore she warned him the entre,
Ne yet is he not thriven so
That he hath gotten a pennie or two,
That quietly is his owne in hold :
Thus hath Richesse us all told,
And whan Richesse us this recorded,
Withouten her we been accorded.

“ And we finde in our accordaunce,
That False Semblaunt and Abstinaunce,
With all the folke of hir battaile
Shull at the hinder gate assaile,
That Wicked Tongue hath in keeping,
With his Normans full of jangling,
And with hem Courtesie and Largesse,
That shull shew hir hardynesse,
To the old wife that kept so hard
Faire Welcomming within her ward :
Than shall Delight and Well Heling
Fond Shame adoune to bring,
With all her host early and late,
They shull assaylen that ilke gate,
Against Drede shall Hardynesse
Assaile, and also Sikernesse,
With all the folke of hir leading
That never wist what wast slaying.

Fraunchise shall fight and eke Pite,
With Daunger full of cruelte,
Thus is your host ordained wele ;
Downe shall the castle every dele,
If everiche doe his entent,

So that Venus be present,
Your mother full of vesselage
That can ynough of such usage ;
Withouten her may no wight speed
This worke, neither for word ne deed :
Therefore is good ye for her send,
For through her may this worke amend."

" LORDINGES, my mother, the gooddes,
That is my ladie, and my mistres,
N'is nat all at my willing,
Ne doth all my desiring.
Yet can she sometime doen labour,
Whan that her lust, in my succour.
As my neede is for to atchieve :
But now I thinke her not to grieve,
My mother is she, and of childhede
I both worship her, and eke drede,
For who that dredeth sire ne dame,
Shall it abie in bodie or name.
And nathelesse, yet can we
Send after her if need be,
And were she nigh, she commen would,
I trow that nothing might her hold.

" My mother is of great prowesse,
She hath tane many a forteresse,
That cost hath many a pound er this,
There I nas not present ywis,
And yet men sayd it was my deede,
But I come never in that steede,
Ne me ne liketh so mote I thee,
That such towers been take with mee,
For why ? Me thinketh that in no wise,
It may be cleped but marchaundise.

Go buy a courser blacke or white,
And pay therefore, than art thou quite,
The marchaunt oweth thee right nought,
Ne thou him whan thou it bought.
I woll not selling clepe yeving,
For selling asketh no guerdoning,
Here lithe no thanke, ne no merite,
That one goeth from that other all quite,
But this selling is not semblable :

“ For when his horse is in the stable
He may it sell againe parde,
And winnen on it, such happe may be,
All may the manne not lese ywis,
For at the least the skinne is his.

“ Or else, if it so betide
That he woll keepe his horse to ride,
Yet is he lord aie of his horse :
But thilke chaffare is well worse,
There Venus entermeteth ought,
For who so such chaffare hath bought,
He shall not worchen so wisely,
That he ne shall lese utterly
Both his monney and his chaffare :
But the seller of the ware,
The prise and profite have shall,
Certaine the buyer shall lese all,
For he ne can so dere it buy
To have lordship and full maistry,
Ne have power to make letting,
Neither for yeft ne for preaching,
That of his chaffare maugre his,
Another shall have as much ywis,
If he woll yeve as much as he,
Of what countrey so that he be,

Or for right nought, so happe may,
If he can flatter her to her pay.

“ Been then suche marchauntes wise ?

No, but fooles in every wise,
Whan they buy such thing wilfully,
There as they lese hir good follily.
But nathelesse, this dare I say,
My mother is not wont to pay,
For she is neither so foole ne nice,
To entremete her of such vice,
But trust well, he shall paie all,
That repent of his bargaine shall,
Whan Poverte put him in distresse,
All were he scholler to Richesse,
That is for me in great yerning,
Whan she assenteth to my willing.

But by my mother saint Venus,
And by her father Saturnus,
That her engendred by his life,
But nat upon his wedded wife,
Yet woll I more unto you swere,
To make this thing the surere.

“ Now by that faith, and that beautee
That I owe to all my brethren free,
Of which there n’is wight under Heaven
That can hir fathers names neven,
So divers and so many there be,
That with my mother have be prive,
Yet woll I sweare for sikernesse,
The pole of Hell to my witnesse,
Now drinke I not this yeare clarre,
If that I lye, or forsworne be,
For of the goddes the usage is,

That who so him forswearth amis,
Shall that yeere drinke no clarre.

“ Now have I sworne ynough parde,
If I forswear me than am I lorne,
But I woll never be forsworne :
Sith Richesse hath me failed here,
She shall abie that trespasse dere,
At least way but I her harme
With swerd, or sparth, or gisarme.

“ For certes sith she loveth not me,
Fro thilke time that she may see
The castle and the tower to shake,
In sorrie time she shall awake ;
If I may gripe a rich man
I shall so pull him, if I can,
That he shall in a fewe stoundes,
Lese all his markes, and his poundes.

“ I shall him make his pence out sling,
But they in his garner spring,
Our maidens shall eke plucke him so,
That him shall needen feathers mo,
And make him sell his lond to spend,
But he the bet can him defend.

POORE men han made hir lord of me ;
Although they not so mightie be,
That they may feede me in delite,
I woll not have them in dispite :
No good man hateth hem, as I gesse,
For chinch and feloun is Richesse,
That so can chase hem and dispise,
And hem defoule in sundrie wise :
They loven full bette, so God me spede,
Than doeth the rich chinchy grede,

And been (in good faith) more stable
And truer, and more serviable :
And therefore it suffiseth me
Hir good herte, and hir beaute ;
They han ou me set all their thought,
And therefore I foryete hem nought.

“ I woll hem bring in great noblesse,
If that I were god of richesse,
As I am god of love soothly,
Such ruth upon hir plaint have I :
Therefore I must his succour be,
That paineth him to serven me,
For if he dyed for love of this,
Than seemeth in me no love there is.”

“ Sir,” sayd they, “ sooth is everie dele
That ye rehearse, and we wote wele
Thilke oath to hold is reasonable,
For it is good and covenable,
That ye on riche men han sworne :
For, sir, this wote we well beforne,
If rich men doen you homage,
That is as fooles doen outrage,
But ye shall not forsworne be,
Ne let therefore to drinke clarre,
Or piment maked fresh and new,
Ladies shull hem such pepir brew,
If that they fall into hir laas,
That they for woe mow saine Alas !
Ladies shullen ever so courteous be,
That they shall quite your oath all free :
Ne seeketh never other vicaire,
For they shall speake with hem so faire
That ye shall hold you payd full well,
Though ye you meddle never a deale,

Let ladies worch with hir thinges,
 They shall hem tell so tale tidinges,
 And moove hem eke so many requestis
 By flatterie, that not honest is,
 And thereto yeve hem such thankinges,
 What with kissing, and with talkinges,
 That certes if they trowed be,
 Shall never leave hem loud ne fee
 That it n'ill as the meble fare,
 Of which they first delivered are :
 Now may you tell us all your will,
 And we your hestes shall fulfill.

BUT False Semblaunt dare not for drede
 Of you, sir, meddle him of this dede.
 For he sayth that ye been his foe,
 He n'ot, if ye will worch him woe :
 Wherefore we pray you all, beau sire,
 That ye foryeve him now your ire,
 And that he may dwell as your man
 With Abstinence his deere lemman,
 This our accord and our will now."

"Parfey," said Love, "I graunt it you,
 I woll well hold him for my man,
 Now let him come : " and he forth ran.

"Falsesemblant," (quod Love) "in this wise
 I take thee here to my service,
 That thou our friendes helpe alwaie,
 And hindreth hem neither night ne daie,
 But doe thy might hem to relieve,
 And eke our enemies that thou grieve,
 Thine be this might, I graunt it thee,
 My king of harlotes shalt thou bee :
 We woll that thou have such honour,

Certaine thou art a false traitour,
And eke a theefe; sith thou were borne,
A thousand times thou art forsworne:
But nathelesse in our hearing,
To put our folke out of doubting,
I bidde thee teach hem, wost thou how?
By some generall signe now,
In what place thou shalt founden be,
If that men had mister of thee,
And how men shall thee best espie,
For thee to know is great maistrie,
Tell in what place is thine haunting."

"Sir I have full divers winning,
That I keepe not rehearsed be,
So that ye would respiten me,
For if that I tell you the sooth,
I may have harme and shame both,
If that my fellowes wisten it,
My tales shoulde me be quit,
For certaine they would hate me,
If ever I knew hir cruelte,
For they would over all hold hem still
Of troth, that is againe hir will,
Such tales keepen they not here,
I might eftsoone buy it full dere,
If I saied of hem any thing,
That ought displeaseth to hir hearing,
For what word that hem pricketh or biteth,
In that word none of hem deliteth,
All were it gospel the evangile,
That would reprove hem of hir guile,
For they are cruell and hautain;
And this thing wote I well certain,
If I speake ought to paire hir loos,

Your court shall not so well be cloos,
That they ne shall wite it at last:
Of good men am I nought agast,
For they woll taken on hem nothing,
Whan that they know all my meaning,
But he that woll it on him take,
He woll himselfe suspicious make,
That he his life let covertly,
In guile and in hypocrisie,
That me engendred and yave fostring.”

“They made a full good engendring,”
(Quod Love) “for who so soothly tell,
They engendred the Divell of Hell.

“But needely, howsoever it bee”
(Quod Love) “I will and charge thee,
To tell anon thy wonning placis,
Hearing each wight that in this place is:
And what life thou livest also,
Hide it no lenger now, whereto:
Thou must discover all thy worching,
How thou servest, and of what thing,
Though that thou shuldest for thy sothsaw
Ben all to beaten and to draw,
And yet art thou not wont parde,
But nathelesse, though thou beaten be,
Thou shalt not be the first, that so
Hath for soothsawe suffred wo.”

“Sir, sith that it may liken you,
Though that I should be slaine right now,
I shall doen your commaundement,
For thereto have I great talent.”

Withouten words mo, right than
False Semblaunt his sermon began,
And saied hem thus in audience,

“ Barons, take heed of my sentence,
That wight that list to have knowing
Of False Seimblant full of flattering,
He must in worldly folke him seke,
And certes in the cloysters eke,
I won no where, but in hem tway,
But not like even, sooth to say,
Shortly I woll herborow me,
There I hope best to hulstred be,
And certainly, sikerest hiding
Is underneath humblest clothing.

“ Religious folke ben full covert,
Secular folke ben more apert :
But nathelesse, I woll not blame
Religious folke, ne hem diffame
In what habite that ever they go :
Religion humble, and true also,
Woll I not blame, ne dispise,
But I n’ill love it in no wise,
I meane of false religious,
That stout been, and malicious,
That wollen in an habite go,
And setten not hir herte thereto.

RELIGIOUS folke been all pitous,
Thou shalt not seene one dispitous,
They loven no pride, ne no strife,
But humbly they woll lede hir life,
With which folke woll I never be,
And if I dwell, I faine me
I may well in hir habite go,
But me were lever my necke atwo,
Than let a purpose that I take,
What covenannt that ever I make.

“ I dwell with hem that proude be,
And full of wiles and subtelte.
That worship of this world coveiten,
And great nede connen expleiten,
And gone and gadren great pitaunces,
And purchase hem the acquaintaunces
Of men that mightie life may leden,
And faine hem poore, and hemselfe feden
With good morsels delicious,
And drinken good wine precious,
And preach us povert and distresse,
And fishen hemselfe great richesse,
With wily nettes that they cast,
It woll come foule out at the last.

“ They ben fro cleane religion went,
They make the world an argument,
That hath a foule conclusion.
I have a robe of religion,
Than am I all religious:
This argument is all roignous,
It is not worth a crooked brere,
Habite ne maketh neither monke ne frere,
But cleane life and devotion,
Maketh men of good religion.

“ Nathelesse, there can none answere,
How high that ever his head he shere,
With rasour whetted never so kene,
That guile in braunches entte thurtene,
There can no wight distinct it so,
That he dare say a word thereto.

“ But what herborow that ever I take,
Or what semblaunt that ever I make,
I meane but guile, and follow that,
For right no more than Gibbe our cat,

(That awaiteth mice and rattes to killen)
Ne entend I but to beguilen,
Ne no wight may, by my clothing,
Wete with what folke is my dwelling,
Ne by my wordes yet parde,
So soft and so pleasaunt they be.

“ Behold the deedes that I do,
But thou be blind thou oughtest so,
For varie hir wordes fro hir deed,
They thinke on guile withouten dreed,
What manner clothing that they weare,
Or what estate what ever they beare,
Lered or leud, lord or ladie,
Knight, squire, burgeis, or bailie.”

Right thus while False Semblant sermoneth,
Eftsoones Love him aresoneth,
And brake his tale in his speaking
As though he had him told leasing.
And saied : “ What devill is that I heare ?
What folke hast thou us nempned here ?
May menne find religioun
In worldly habitatioun ?”

“ Yea, sir, it followeth nat that they
Should lead a wicked life parfey,
Ne not therefore hir soules lese,
That hem to worldly clothes chese,
For certes it were great pitee ;
Men may in secular clothes see,
Florishen holy religioun ;
Full many a saint in field and toun,
With many a virgine glorious,
Devout, and full religious,
Han died, that common cloth aye beren,
Yet saintes neverthesse they weren.

I could reckon you many a ten,
Yea welnigh all these holy women
That men in churches hery and seke,
Both maidens, and these wives eke,
That baren full many a faire child here,
Weared alway clothes seculere,
And in the same diden they
That saints weren, and ben alway.

“ The nine thousand maidens dere,
That beren in Heaven hir cierges clere,
Of which men rede in church and sing,
Were take in secular clothing,
When they received martirdome,
And wonnen Heaven unto hir home.

“ Good herte maketh the good thought,
The clothing yeveth ne reveth nought :
The good thought and the worching,
That maketh the religion flouring,
There lieth the good religioun,
After the right ententioun.

“ Who so tooke a weathers skin,
And wrapped a greedy wolfe therein,
For he should go with lambes white,
Wenest thou not he would hem bite ?
Yes : neverthelesse as he were wood
He would hem wirry, and drinke the blood,
And well the rather hem deceive,
For sith they coude nat perceive
His tregette, and his crueltie,
They would him follow, altho he fle.

If there be wolves of such hew,
Amonges these apostles new
Thou, holy church, thou maist be wailed,

Sith that thy citie is assailed
Through knightes of thine owne table,
God wot thy lordship is doutable :
If they enforce it to win,
That should defend it fro within,
Who might defence ayenst hem make ?
Without stroke it mote be take,
Of trepeget or mangonell,
Without displaying of pensell,
And if God n'll done it succour,
But let renne in this colour,
Thou must thy hestes letten bee,
Than is there nought, but yeeld thee,
Or yeve hem tribute douteles,
And hold it of hem to have pees :
But greater harme betide thee,
That they all maister of it bee :
Well con they scorne thee withall,
By day stuffen they the wall,
And all the night they minen there :
Nay, thou planten must els where
Thine impes, if thou wolt fruit have,
Abide not there thy selfe to save,

BUT now peace, here I turne againe,
I woll no more of this thing faine,
If I might passen me hereby,
For I might maken you weary ;
But I woll heten you alway,
To helpe your friendes what I may,
So they wollen my company,
For they been shent all utterly,
But if so fall, that I be
Oft with hem, and they with me,

And eke my lemman mote they serve,
Or they shull not my love deserve,
Forsooth I am a false traitour,
God judged me for a theefe trechour,
Forsworne I am, but well nigh none
Wote of my guile, till it be done.

“Through me hath many one deth received,
That my treget never aperceived,
And yet receiveth, and shall receive,
That my falsenesse shall never apperceive:
But who so doth, if he wise be,
Him is right good beware of me.
But so sligh is the aperceiving
That all to late commeth knowing;
For Protheus that coud him chaunge,
In every shape homely and straunge,
Coud never such guile ne treasoun
As I, for I come never in toun
There as I might knowen be,
Though men me both might here and see.
Full well I can my clothes chaunge,
Take one, and make another straunge.
Now am I knight, now chastelaine,
Now prelate, and now chaplaine,
Now priest, now clerke, now fostere,
Now am I maister, now schollere
Now monke, now chanon, now baily,
What ever mister man am I.

“Now am I prince, now am I page,
And can by herte every language,
Sometime am I hoore and old,
Now am I younge, stoute, and bold,
Now am I Robert, now Robin,
Now frere minor, now jacobin,

And with me followeth my loteby,
To done me sollace and company,
That hight dame Abstinence, and raigned
In many a queint array faigned,
Right as it commeth to her liking,
I fulfill all her desiring.

“ Sometime a womans clothe take I,
Now am I a maid, now lady.

“ Sometime I am religious,
Now like an anker in an hous.

“ Sometime am I prioresse,
And now a nonne, and now abbesse,
And go through all regions,
Seeking all religiouns.

“ But to what order that I am sworne,
I take the straw and beat the corne,
To jolly folke I enhabite,
I aske no more but hir habite.

“ What woll ye more? in every wise
Right as me list I me disguise?

“ Well can I beare me under wede,
Unlike is my word to my dede,
Thus make I into my trappes fall
The people, through my priviledges all,
That ben in Christendome alive.

“ I may assoile, and I may shrive,
That no prelate may let me,
All folke, where ever they found be :
I n’ot no prelate may done so,
But it the pope be, and no mo,
That made thilke establishing,
Now is not this a proper thing?
But were my sleights apperceived

.

As I was wont, and wost thou why?
For I did hem a tregetry,
But thereof yeve I a little tale,
I have the silver and the male,
So have I preached and eke shriven,
So have I take, so have I yeven,
Through hir folly, husbond and wife,
That I lede right a jolly life,
Through simplesse of the prelacy,
They know not all my tregetry.

BUT for as much as man and wife
Should shew hir parish priest hir life
Ones a yeare, as sayth the booke,
Ere any wight his housel tooke,
Than have I priviledges large,
That may of mucche thing discharge,
For he may say right thus pardee:

“ ‘ Sir Priest, in shrift I tell it thee,
That he to whom that I am shriven,
Hath me assoyled, and me yeven
Penaunce soothly for my sin,
Which that I found me guilty in,
Ne I ne have never entencion
To make double confession,
Ne rehearse eft my shrift to thee,
O shrift is right ynough to mee,
This ought thee suffice wele,
Ne be not rebell never adele,
For certes, though thou haddest it sworne,
I wote no priest ne prelate borne
That may to shrift eft me constraine,
And if they done I woll me plaine,
For I wote where to plaine wele,

Thou shalt not streine me a dele,
Ne enforce me, ne not me trouble,
To make my confession double ;
Ne I have none affection
To have double absolution :
The first is right ynough to mee,
This latter assayling quite I thee,
I am unbound, what maist thou find
More of my sinnes me to unbind ?
For he that might hath in his hond,
Of all my sinnes me unbond :
And if thou wolt me thus constrain
That me mote nedes on thee plaine,
There shall no judge imperiall,
Ne bishop, ne officiall,
Done judgement on me, for I
Shall gone and plaine me openly
Unto my shriftfather new,
That hight Frere Wolfe untrew,
And he shall chuse him for mee,
For I trow he can hamper thee ;
But lord he would be wroth withall,
If men would him Frere Wolfe call,
For he would have no patience,
But done all cruell vengience,
He would his might done at the leest,
Nothing spare for Goddes heest,
And God so wise be my succour,
But thou yeve me my saviour
At Easter, whan it liketh mee,
Without preasing more on thee,
I woll forth, and to him gone,
And he shall housell me anone,
For I am out of thy grutching,

I keepe not deale with thee nothing.'

" Thus may he shrive him, that forsaketh
His parish priest and to me taketh,
And if the priest woll him refuse,
I am full ready him to accuse,
And him punish and hamper so,
That he his church shall forgo.

" But who so hath in his feeling
The consequence of such shriving,
Shall seene, that priest may never have might
To know the conscience aright
Of him that is under his cure :
And this is ayenst holy scripture,
That biddeth every herde honest
Have very knowing of his beest.
But poore folke that gone by strete,
That have no gold, ne summes grete,
Hem would I let to hir prelates,
Or let hir priestes know hir states,
For to me right nought yeve they,
And why it is, for they ne may.

" They ben so bare, I take no keepe,
But I woll have the fat sheepe ;
Let parish priests have the lene,
I yeve not of hir harme a bene ;
And if that prelates grutch it,
That oughten wroth be in hir wit,
To lese hir fat beastes so,
I shall yeve hem a stroke or two,
That they shall lesen with force,
Yea, both hir mitre and hir croce.

" Thus yape I hem, and have do long,
My priviledges ben so strong."

False Semblant would have stinted here,

But Love ne made him no such chere,
That he was weary of his saw,
But for to make him glad and faw,
He said, " Tell on more specially,
How that thou servest untruly.

" Tell forth, and shame thee never adele,
For as thine habit sheweth wele,
Thou servest an holy hermite.

" Sooth is, but I am but an hypocrite.
Thou goest and preachest poverté ?

" Yea, sir, but Richesse hath poste,
Thou preachest abstinence also ?"

" Sir, I woll fillen, so mote I go,
My paunche, of good meat and wine,
As should a maister of divine,
For how that I me poore faine,
Yet all poore folke I disdaine.

I LOVE better the acquaintaunce
Ten times of the king of Fraunce,
Than of a poore man of mild mood,
Though that his soule be also good.

" For whan I see beggers quaking,
Naked on mixens all stinking,
For hunger crie, and eke for care,
I entremet not of hir fare,
They ben so poore, and full of pine,
They might not ones yeve me a dine,
For they have nothing but hir life,
What should he yeve that licketh his knife ?
It is but folly to entremete
To seeke in houndes nest fat mete :
Let beare hem to the spittle anone,
But fro me comfort get they none :

But a rich sicke usurere
Would I visite and draw nere,
Him would I comfort and relete,
For I hope of his gold to gete,
And if that wicked Death him have,
I woll go with him in his grave,
And if there any reprove me,
Why that I let the poore be,
Wost thou how I not ascape?
I say and sweare him full rape,
That riche men han more tetches
Of sinne, than han poore wretches,
And han of counsaile more mistere,
And therefore I would draw hem nere:
But as great hurt, it may so be,
Hath a soule in right great poverte,
As soule in great richesse forsooth,
Albeit that they hurten both,
For richesse and mendicities
Ben cleped two extreamities,
The meane is cleped suffisaunce,
There lieth of vertue the aboundaunce.

“ For Salomon full well I wote,
In his parables us wrote,
As it is knowen of many a wight,
In his thirteene chapiter right,
God thou me keepe for thy poste,
Fro richesse and mendicite,
For if a rich man him dresse,
To thinke too much on richesse,
His herte on that so ferre is sette,
That he his creator doth foryette,
And him that beggeth, woll aye greve.
How should I by his word him leve,

Unneth that he n'is a micher,
Forsworne, or els Goddes lier,
Thus sayth Salomon sawes.

“ Ne we find written in no lawes,
And namely in our Christen lay,
(Who saith ye, I dare say nay)
That Christ, ne his apostles dere,
While that they walked in earth here,
Were never seene hir bred begging,
For they nolden beggen for nothing.

“ And right thus were men wont to teach,
And in this wise would it preach,
The maisters of divinitie
Sometime in Paris the citie.

And if men would there gaine appose
The naked text, and let the glose,
It might soone assoiled bee,
For men may well the sooth see,
That pardie they might aske a thing
Plainely forth without begging,
For they weren Goddes herdes dere,
And cure of soules hadden here,
They nolde nothing begge hir food,
For after Christ was done on rood,
With their proper honds they wrought,
And with travaile, and els nought,
They wonnen all hir sustenance,
And liveden forth in hir penaunce,
And the remenaunt yafe away
To other poore folkes alway.

“ They neither builden toure ne halle,
But they in houses small with alle.

“ A mighty man that can and may,

Should with his hond and body alway,
Winne him his food in labouring,
If he ne have rent or such a thing;
Although he be religious,
And God to serven curious,
Thus mote he done, or do trespaas,
But if it be in certaine caas,
That I can rehearse, if mister bee,
Right well, whan the time I see.

“ Seeke the booke of Saint Augustine,
Be it in paper or perchemine,
There as he witte of these worchings,
Thou shalt scene that none excusings
A perfit man ne should seeke
By wordes, ne by deedes eke,
Although he be religious,
And God to serven curious,
That he ne shall, so mote I go,
With proper honds and body also
Get his food in labouring,
If he ne have properte of thing,
Yet should he sell all his substaunce,
And with his swinke have sustenaunce,
If he be perfite in bounte;
Thus han the bookes told me:
For he that woll gone idelly,
And useth it aye busily
To haunten other mennes table,
He is a trechour full of fable,
Ne he ne may by good reason
Excuse him by his orison,
For men behoveth in some gise,
Ben sometime in Goddes service,
To gone and purchasen hir nede.

“ Men mote eaten, that is no drede,
And sleepe, and eke do other thing,
So long may they leave praying.

“ So may they eke hir prayer blinne,
While that they werke hir meat to winne,
Saint Austine woll thereto accord,
In thilke booke that I record.

“ Justinian eke, that made lawes,
Hath thus forboden by old sawes :
‘ No man, up paine to be dead,
Mighty of body, to beg his bread,
If he may swinke it for to gete,
Men should him rather maime or bete,
Or done of him aperte justice,
Than suffren him in such mallice.’

“ They done not well so mote I go,
That taken such almesse so,
But if they have some priviledge,
That of the paine hem woll alledge.

“ But how that is, can I not see,
But if the prince deceived bee,
Ne I ne wene not sikerly,
That they may have it rightfully

“ But I woll not determine
Of princes power, ne define,
Ne by my word comprehend ywis,
If it so ferre may stretch in this;
I woll not entremete a dele,
But I trow that the booke sayth wele,
Who that taketh almesses, that bee
Dew to folke that men may see
Lame, feeble, weary, and bare,
Poore, or in such manner care,
That con winne hem nevermo,

For they have no power thereto,
He eateth his owne dampning,
But if he lie that made all thing.
And if ye such a truant find,
Chastise him well, if ye be kind,
But they would hate you parcaas,
If ye fellen in hir laas.

“ They would eftsoones do you scathe,
If that they might, late or rathe,
For they be not full patient,
That han the world thus foule blent,
And weteth well, that God bad
The good man sell all that he had,
And follow him, and to poore it yeve :
He would not therefore that he live,
To serven him in mendience,
For it was never his sentence,
But he bad werken whan that need is,
And follow him in goode deedis.

“ Saint Poule that loved all holy church,
He bade the apostles for to wurch,
And winnen hir livelode in that wise,
And hem defendéd truandise,
And said, werketh with your honden,
Thus should the thing be understonden.

“ He nolde ywis have bid hem begging,
Ne sellen gospell, ne preaching,
Least they beraft, with hir asking,
Folke of hir cattell or of hir thing.

“ For in this world is many a man
That yeveth his good, for he ne can
Werne it for shame, or else he
Would of the asker delivered be,
And for he him encombreth so,

He yeveth him good to let him go :
But it can him nothing profite,
They lese the yeft and the merite.

“The good folke that Poule to preached,
Profred him oft, whan he hem teached,
Some of hir good in charite,
But thereof right nothing tooke he,
But of his honde would he gette
Clothes to wrine him, and his mete.

TELL me than how a man may liven,
That all his good to poore hath yeven,
And woll but onely bidde his bedes,
And never with honds labour his nedes.
May he do so? Yea sir: and how?
Sir I woll gladly tell you :
Saint Austen saith, a man may be
In houses that han properte,
As templers and hospitelers,
And as these chanons regulers,
Or white monkes, or these blake,
I woll no mo ensamples make,
And take thereof his susteining,
For therein lithe no begging,
But otherwaies not ywis,
Yet Austen gabbeth not of this,
And yet full many a monke laboureth,
That God in holy church honoureth :
For whan hir swinking is agone,
They rede and sing in church anone.

“And for there hath ben great discord,
As many a wight may beare record,
Upon the estate of mendicience,
I woll shortely in your presence,

Tell how a man may begge at need,
That hath not wherewith him to feed,
Maugre his fellowes janglings,
For soothfastnesse woll none hidings,
And yet percase I may obey,
That I to you soothly thus sey.

Lo here the case especiall,
If a man be so bestiall,
That he of no craft hath science,
And nought desireth ignorance,
Than may he go a begging yerne,
Till he some other craft can lerne,
Through which without truanding,
He may in trouth have his living.

“Or if he may done no labour,
For elde, or sicknesse, or langour,
Or for his tender age also,
Than may he yet a begging go.

“Or if he have peraventure,
Through usage of his noriture,
Lived over deliciously,
Than oughten good folke comenly,
Han of his mischeefe some pite,
And suffren him also, that he
May gone about and begge his bread,
That he be not for hunger dead ;
Or if he have of craft conning,
And strength also, and desiring
To worchen, as he had what,
But he find neither this ne that,
Than may he begge till that he
Have gotten his necessite.

“Or if his winning be so lite,

That his labour woll not aquite
Sufficiauntly all his living,
Yet may he go his brede begging
Fro dore to dore, he may go trace,
Till he the remnaunt may purchase.

“Or if a man would undertake
Any emprise for to make,
In the rescous of our lay,
And it defenden as he may,
Be it with armes or lettrure,
Or other convenable cure,
If it be so he poore be,
Than may he begge, till that he
May find in trouth for to swinke
And get him clothe, meat, and drinke.
Swinke he with his hondes corporell,
And not with hondes esprituell.

In all this case, and in semblables,
If that there ben mo reasonables,
He may begge, as I tell you here,
And eles not in no manere,
As William Saint Amour would preach,
And oft would dispute and teach
Of this matter all openly
At Paris full solemnely,
And also God my soule blesse
As he had in this stedfastnesse
The accord of the universite
And of the people, as seemeth me.

“No good man ought it to refuse,
Ne ought him thereof to excuse,
Be wrothe or blithe, who so be,
For I woll speake, and tell it thee,

All should I die, and be put down,
As was saint Poule in derke prisoun,
Or be exiled in this caas
With wrong, as maister William was,
That my mother Hypocrisie
Banished for her great envie.

“ My mother flemed him Saint Amour :
This noble did suche labour
To sustene ever the loyalte,
That he too much agilte me :
He made a booke, and let it write,
Wherein his life he did all write,
And would iche renied begging,
And lived by my traveiling,
If I ne had rent ne other good,
What weneth he that I were wood ?
For labour might me never please,
I have more will to ben at ease,
And have well lever, sooth to say,
Before the people patter and pray,
And wrie me in my foxerie
Under a cope of papelardie.”

(Quod Love) “ What divell is this that I here,
What wordes tellest thou me here ?”

“ What, sir, falsenesse, that apert is.”

“ Than dredest thou not God ?” “ No certes :

For selde in great thing shall he spede

In this world, that God woll drede,

For folke that hem to vertue yeven,

And truely on hir owen liven,

And hem in goodnesse aye content,

On hem is little thrift ysent,

Such folke drinken great misease,

That life may me never please.

“ But see what gold han userers,
And silver eke in garners,
Taillagiers, and these monyours,
Bailiffes, beadles, provost, countours,
These liven well nigh by ravine,
The small people hem mote encline,
And they as wolves woll hem eten :
Upon the poore folke they geten
Full much of that they spend or kepe,
N’is none of hem that they n’ill strepe,
And wrine hem selfe well at full,
Without scalding they hem pull.

“ The strong the feeble overgothe,
But I that weare my simple clothe,
Robbe both robbed, and robbours,
And guile guiling, and guilours :
By my treget, I gather and threste
The great treasour into my cheste,
That lieth with me so fast bound,
Mine high paleis doe I found,
And my delightes I fulfill,
With wine at feastes at my will,
And tables full of entremees ;
I woll no life, but ease and pees,
And winne gold to spend also,
For whan the greate bagge is go,
It commeth right with my japes,
Make I not well tomlle mine apes :
To winnen is alway mine entent,
My purchase is better than my rent,
For though I should beaten be,
Over all I entremet me ;
Without me maie no wight dure,
I walke soules for to cure,

Of all the world cure have I
In brede and length ; boldly
I woll both preach and eke counsaillen,
With hondes woll I not travailen,
For of the pope I have the bull,
I ne hold not my wittes dull,
I woll not stinten in my live
These emperours for to shrive,
Or kinges, dukes, and lordes grete :
But poore folke all quite I lete,
I love no such shriving parde,
But it for other cause be :
I recke not of poore men,
Hir estate is not worth an hen.

“ Where findest thou a swinker of labour
Have me to his confessour ?
But empresses, and duchesses,
These queenes, and eke countesses,
These abbesses, and eke bigines,
These great ladies palasins,
These jolly knights, and bailives,
These nonnes, and these burgeis wives
That riche ben, and eke pleasing,
And these maidens welfaring,
Where so they clad or naked be,
Uncounsailed goeth there none fro me ;
And for hir soules safete,
At lord and lady, and hir meine,
I aske, whan they hem to me shrive,
The propertie of all hir live,
And make hem trow, both most and least,
Hir parish priest is but a beast
Ayenst me and my company,
That shrewes been as great (as I)

For which I woll not hide in hold,
No privete that me is told,
That I by word or signe ywis,
Ne woll make hem know what it is,
And they wollen also tellen me,
They hele fro me no privete.
And for to make you hem perceiven,
That usen folke thus to deceiven,
I woll you saine withouten drede,
What men may in the Gospell rede,
Of Saint Mathew the gspellere,
That saieth, as I shall you say here.

UPON the chaire of Moses
Thus it is glosed douteles,
(That is the olde testament,
For thereby is the chaire ment)
Sitte scribes and pharisen,
That is to saine, the cursed men,
Which that we ipocrites call :
Doeth that they preache, I rede you all,
But doeth not as they doen adele,
That been not weary to say wele.
But to doe well, no will have they,
And they would bind on folke alway
(That been to be beguiled able)
Burdons that been inportable ;
On folkes shoulders things they couchen,
That they n'll with their fingers touchen.
And why woll they not touch it, why ?
For hem ne list nat sikerly,
For sadde burdons that men taken,
Make folkes shoulders aken.

“ And if they do ought that good bee,

That is for folke it should see :
Hir burdons larger maken they,
And maken hir hemmes wide alwey,
And loven seates at the table
The first and most honourable,
And for to han the first chairis,
In synagogues, to hem full dere is,
And willen that folke hem loute and grete,
Whan that they passen through the strete,
And wollen be cleped maister also :
But they ne should not willen so,
The gospell is there ayenst I gesse,
That sheweth well hir wickednesse.

ANOTHER custome use we
Of hem that woll ayenst us be,
We hate hem deadly everychone,
And we woll werry him, as one,
Him that one hateth, hate we all,
And conject how to doen him fall :
And if we seene him winne honour,
Richesse or preise, through his valour,
Provende, rent, or dignite,
Full fast ywis compassen we
By what ladder he is clomben so,
And for to maken him downe to go,
With treason we woll him defame,
And doen him lese his good name.

“ Thus from his ladder we him take,
And thus his frendes foes we make,
But word ne wete shall he none,
Till all his frendes been his fone,
For if we did it openly,
We might have blame readily,

For had he wist of our mallice,
He had him kept, but he were nice.

“ Another is this, that if so fall,
That there be one among us all
That doeth a good tourne, out of drede,
We saine it is our alder dede,
Yea sikerly, though he it fained,
Or that him list, or that him dained
A man through him avaunced be,
Thereof all parteners be we,
And tellen folke where so we go,
That man through us is sprongen so.

“ And for to have of men praising,
We purchase through our flattering
Of riche men of great poste
Letters, to witnesse our bounte,
So that man weeneth that may us see,
That all vertue in us bee.

“ And alway poore we us faine,
But how so that we begge or plaine,
We ben the folke without leasing,
That all thing have without having.

“ Thus be dradde of the people ywis,
And gladly my purpose is this.

“ I deale with no wight, but he
Have gold and treasour great plente,
Hir acquaintaunce well love I :
This much my desire shortly,
I entremet me of brocages,
I make peace and mariages,
I am gladly executour,
And many times a procuratour,
I am sometime messangere,
That falleth not to my mistere.

“ And many times I make enquest,
For me that office is nat honest,
To deale with other mennes thing,
That is to me a great liking :
And if that ye have ought to do
In place that I repaire to,
I shall it speden through my wit,
As soone as ye have told me it,
So that ye serve me to pay,
My service shall be yours alway.

“ But who so woll chastice me,
Anone my love lost hath he,
For I love no man in no gise,
That woll me reprove or chastise,
But I woll all folke undertake,
And of no wight no teaching take,
For I that other folke chastie,
Woll not be taught fro my follie.

I LOVE none hermitage more,
All desertes and holtes hoore
And greate woodes everychon,
I let hem to the Baptist Iohn,
I queth him quite, and him relese
Of Egipt all the wildernesse ;
Too ferre were all my mansiouns
Fro all cities and good touns.

“ My paleis and mine house make I
There men may renne in openly,
And say that I the world forsake,
But all amiddle I build and make
My house, and swim and play therein
Bette than a fish doeth with his finne.

OF Antichristes men am I,
Of which that Christ sayeth openly,
They have habite of holinesse,
And liven in such wickednesse.

“ Outward lamben seemen we,
Full of goodnesse and of pite,
And inward we withouten fable
Been greedy wolves ravisable.

“ We enviroun both lond and see,
With all the world werrien wee,
We woll ordaine of alle thing,
Of folkes good, and hir living.

“ If there be castell or cite
Within that any bougerous be,
Although that they of Millaine were,
For thereof been they blamed there ;
Or if a wight out of measure,
Would lene hir gold, and take usure,
For that he is so covetous,
Or if he be too lecherous,
Or these that haunten simonie,
Or provost full of trecherie,
Or prelate living jollily,
Or priest that halt his quein him by,
Or olde hoores hostillers,
Or other baudes or bordellers,
Or els blamed of any vice,
Of which men shoulde doen justice :

“ By all the saintes that we prey,
But they defend them with lamprey,
With luce, with elis, with samons,
With tender geese, and with capons,
With tartes, or with cheses fat,
With daintie flaunes, brode and flat,

With caleweis, or with pullaile,
With coninges, or with fine vitaile,
That we under our clothes wide,
Maken through our gollet glide,
Or but he woll doe come in hast
Roe venison bake in past,
Whether so that he loure or groine,
He shall have of a corde a loigne,
With which men shall him bind and lede,
To breunne him for his siuful dede,
That men shull heare him crie and rore
A mile way about and more,
Or els he shall in prison die,
But if he woll his friendship buy,
Or smerten that, that he hath do,
More than his guilt amounteth to.

“ But and he couth through his sleight
Doe maken up a toure of height,
Nought rought I whether of stone or tree,
Or earth, or turves though it be,
Though it were of no vounde stone,
Wrought with squier and scantilone,
So that the toure were stuffed well
With all riches temporell :

“ And than that he would up dresse
Engines, both more and lesse,
To cast at us by every side,
To beare his good name wide :

“ Such sleighthes I shall you yeven,
Barrels of wine, by sixe or seven,
Or gold in sackes great plente,
He should soone delivered be,
And if he have no such pitences,
Let him studie in equipolences,

And lette lies and fallaces,
If that he would deserve our graces,
Or we shall beare him such witnesse
Of sinne, and of his wretchednesse,
And down his lose so wide renne
That all quicke we should him brenne,
Or els yeve him such penaunce,
That is well worse than the pitaunce.

“For thou shalt never for nothing
Con knowen aright by hir clothing
The traitours full of trecherie,
But thou hir werkes can espie.

“And ne had the good keeping be
Whylome of the universite,
That keepeth the key of Christendome,
We had been tourmented all and some.

“Such been the stinking prophetis,
N’is none of hem, that good prophet is,
For they through wicked entention,
The yeare of the incarnation
A thousand and two hundred yere,
Five and fiftie ferther ne nere,
Broughten a booke with sorrie grace,
To yeven ensample in common place,
That saied thus, though it were fable,
This is the gospell perdurable,
That fro the Holy Ghost is sent.
Well were it worthe to be brent.
Entitled was in such manere
This booke, of which I tell here,
There nas no wight in all Paris,
Beforene our ladie at parvis,
That they ne might the booke buy,
The sentence pleased hem well truely.

To the copie, if him talent tooke
Of the evangelistes booke,
There might he see by great traisoun
Full many a false comparisoun.

“ As much as through his greate might,
Be it of heate or of light,
The Sunne surmounteth the Moone,
That troubler is, and chaungeth soone,
And the nutte kernell the shell,
I scorne nat that I you tell :

“ Right so withouten any gile
Surmounteth this noble evangile,
The word of any evangelist,
And to hir title they tooke Christ,
And many such comparisoun,
Of which I make no mentioun,
Might menne in that booke find,
Who so could of hem have mind.

“ The universitie that tho was asleepe
Gan for to braide, and taken keepe,
And at the noise, the head up cast,
Ne never sithen slept it fast,
But up it stert, and armes tooke
Ayenst this false horrible booke,
All ready battaile for to make,
And to the judge the booke they take.

“ But they that broughten the booke there,
Hent it anone away for feare,
They n’olde shew it no more a dele,
But than it kept, and keepen wele,
Till such a time that they may see,
That they so stronge woxen bee,
That no wight may hem well withstond,
For by that booke they durst not stond,

Away they gonne it for to bere,
For they ne durst not answere
By exposition no glose
To that that clerkes woll appose
Ayenst the cursednesse ywis
That in that booke written is.

“ Now wote I nat, ne I can nat see
What manner end that there shall bee
Of all this that they hide,
But yet algate they shall abide,
Till that they may it bette defend,
This trow I best woll be hir end.

“ Thus Antichrist abiden we,
For we ben all of his meine,
And what man that woll not be so,
Right soone he shall his life forgo.
We woll a people upon him arise,
And through our guile doen him cease,
And him on sharpe speares rive,
Or other waies bring him fro live,
But if that he woll follow ywis,
That in our booke written is.

Thus much woll our booke signifie,
That while Peter had maistrie
May never Iohn shew well his might.

“ Now have I you declared right,
The meaning of the barke and rinde,
That maketh the entencions blinde,
But now at erst I woll begin,
To expounne you the pith within,
And the seculers comprehend,
That Christes lawe woll defend,
And should it kepen and maintainen

Ayenst hem that all sustenen,
And falsely to the people teachen,
That Iohn betokeneth hem to preachen,
That there n'is law covenable,
But thilke gospell perdurable,
That fro the Holy Ghost was sent
To turne folke that ben miswent.

“The strength of John they understond,
The grace in which they say they stond,
That doeth the sinfull folke convert,
And hem to Jesu Christ revert,
Full many another horriblee,
May menne in that booke see,
That been commaunded doubtlesse
Ayenst the law of Rome expresse,
And all with Antichrist they holden,
As men may in the booke beholden.

“And than commaunden they to sleen,
All tho that with Peter been,
But they shall never have that might,
And God toforne, for strife to fight,
That they ne shall ynough find,
That Peters law shall have in mind,
And ever hold, and so mainteen,
That at the last it shall be seen,
That they shall all come thereto,
For ought that they can speake or do.

“And thilke lawe shall not stond,
That they by John have understond,
But maugre hem it shall adoun,
And been brought to confusioun,

“But I woll stint of this matere,
For it is wonder long to here,
But had that ilke booke endured,

Of better estate I were ensured,
And friendes have I yet pardee,
That han me set in great degree.

Of all this world is emperour
Guile my father, the trechour,
And empresse my mother is,
Maugre the Holy Ghost ywis,
Our mightie lineage and our rout
Reigneth in every reigne about,
And well is worthy we ministers be,
For all this worlde governe we,
And can the folke so well deceive,
That none our guile can perceive,
And though they doen, they dare not say,
The sooth dare no wight bewray.

“ But he in Christes wrath him leadeth,
That more than Christ my brethren dredeth.
He n’is no full good champion,
That dredeth such similation,
Nor that for paine woll refusen,
Us to correct and accusen.

“ He woll not entremete by right,
Ne have God in his eyesight,
And therefore God shall him punice;
But me ne recketh of no vice,
Sithen men us loven comunably,
And holden us for so worthy,
That we may folke reprove echone,
And we n’ill have represe of none:
Whom shoulde folke worshippen so,
But us that stinten never mo
To patren while that folke may us see,
Though it not so behind hem be.

AND where is more wood follie,
Than to enhaunce chivalrie,
And love noble men and gay,
That jolly clothes wearen alway ?
If they be such folke as they seemen,
So cleane, as men hir clothes demen,
And that hir wordes follow hir dede,
It is great pitie out of drede,
For they woll be none hypocritis,
Of hem me thinketh greate spight is,
I cannot love hem on no side.

“ But beggers with these hoodes wide,
With sleigh and pale faces leane,
And graie clothes nat full cleane,
But fretted full of tatarwagges,
And high shoes knopped with dagges,
That frouncen like a quaile pipe,
Or bootes riving as a gipe.

“ To such folke as I you devise,
Should princes and these lordes wise,
Take all hir landes and hir things,
Both warre and peace in governings,
To such folke should a prince him yeve,
That would his life in honour live.

“ And if they be nat as they seme,
They serven thus the world to queme,
There would I dwell to deceive
The folke, for they shall nat perceive.

“ But I ne speake in no such wise,
That men should humble habite dispise,
So that no pride there under be,
No man should hate, as thinketh me,
The poore man in such clothing,
But God ne preiseth him nothing,

That saith he hath the world forsake,
And hath to worldly glory him take,
And woll of such delices use,
Who may that begger well excuse ?

“ That papelarde, that him yeeldeth so,
And woll to worldly ease go,
And saith that he the world hath left,
And greedily it gripeth eft,
He is the hound, shame is to saine,
That to his casting goeth againe.

BUT unto you dare I not lie,
But might I feelen or espie,
That ye perceived it nothing,
Ye should have a starke leasing :
Right in your hond thus to beginne,
I nolde it let for no sinne.”

The god lough at the wonder tho,
And every wight gan lough also,
And saied : “ Lo here a man right,
For to be trustie to every wight.”

“ FALSE Semblaunt,” (quod Love) “ say to mee,
Sith I thus have avaunced thee,
That in my court is thy dwelling,
And of ribaundes shalt be my king,
Wolt thou well holden my forwardes ?”

“ Yea, sir, from hence forwardes,
Had never your father here beforene,
Servaunt so true, sith he was borne,
That is ayenst all nature.

“ Sir, put you in that aventure,
For though ye borowes take of me,
The sikerer shall ye never be

For hostages, ne sikernesse,
Or chartres, for to beare witnesse :
I take your selfe to record here,
That men ne may in no manere
Tearen the wolfe out of his hide,
Till he be slaine backe and side,
Though men him beat and all defile,
What wene ye that I woll beguile ?

“ For I am clothed meekely,
There under is all my treachery,
Mine herte chaungeth never the mo
For none habite, in which I go ;
Though I have chere of simplenesse,
I am not wearie of shreudnesse ;
My lemman, strained Abstinence,
Hath mister of my purveiaunce,
She had full long ago be dede,
Nere my counsaile and my rede ;
Let her alone, and you and mee.”

And Love answered, “ I trust thee
Without borow, for I woll none.”

And False Semblant the theefe anone,
Right in that ilke same place,
That had of treason all his face,
Right blacke within, and white without,
Thanking him, gan on his knees lout.

Than was there nought, but every man
Now to assaute, that sailen can
(Quod Love) and that full hardely :
Than armed they hem comenly
Of such armour as to hem fell.
Whan they were armed fiers and fell,
They went hem forth all in a rout,
And set the castle all about ;

They will not away for no dread,
Till it so be that they ben dead,
Or till they have the castle take,
And foure battels they gan make,
And parted hem in foure anone,
And tooke hir way, and forth they gone,
The foure gates for to assaile,
Of which the keepers woll not faile,
For they ben neither sicke ne dede,
But hardie folke, and strong in dede.

Now woll I sain the countenaunce
Of False Semblant, and Abstinaunce,
That ben to Wicked Tongue went ;
But first they held hir parliament,
Whether it to doen were,
To maken hem be knowen there,
Or els walken forth disguised :
But at the last they devised,
That they would gone in tapinage,
As it were in a pilgrimage,
Like good and holy folke unfeined :
And dame Abstinence streined
Tooke of the robe of cameline,
And gan her gratche as a bigine.

A large coverchief of thread,
She wrapped all about her head,
But she forgate not her psaltere.

A paire of beades eke she bere
Upon a lace, all of white thread,
On which that she her beades bede,
But she ne bought hem never adele,
For they were given her, I wote welc,
God wote of a full holy frere,
That said he was her father dere,

To whom she had after went,
Than any frere of his covent.

And he visited her also,
And many a sermon saied her to,
He n'olde let for man on live,
That he ne would her oft shrive,
And with so great devotion
They made her confession,
That they had oft for the nones
Two heades in one hood at ones.

Of faire shape I devised her thee,
But pale of face sometime was shee,
That false tratouresse untrew,
Was like that sallow horse of hew,
That in the Apocalips is shewed,
That signifieth tho folke beshrewed,
That been all full of trecherie,
And pale, through hypocrisie,
For on that horse no colour is,
But onely dead and pale ywis,
Of such a colour enlangoured,
Was Abstinence ywis coloured,
Of her estate she her repented,
As her visage represented.

She had a burdoune all of theft,
That Guile had yeve her of his yeft,
And a scrippe of faint distresse,
That full was of elengenesse,
And forth she walked soberlie :
And False Semblant saynt, je vous die,
And as it were for such mistere,
Doen on the cope of a frere,
With cheare simple, and full pitous,
His looking was not disdeinous,

Ne proud, but meeke and full peesible.

About his necke he bare a Bible,
And squierly forth gan he gon,
And for to rest his limmes upon,
He had of treason a portent,
As he were feeble, his way he went,

But in his sleve he gan to thring
A rasour sharpe, and well biting,
That was forged in a forge,
Which that men clepen coupe gorge.

So long forth hir way they nomen,
Till they to Wicked Tongue comen,
That at his gate was sitting,
And saw folke in the way passing.

The pilgrimes saw he fast by,
That bearen hem full meekely,
And humbly they with hem mette,
Dame Abstinence first him grette,
And sith him False Semblant salued,
And he hem, but he not remued,
For he ne drede him not adele:
For when he saw hir faces wele,
Alway in herte him thought so,
He should know hem both two,
For well he knew dame Abstinaunce,
But he ne knew not Constrainaunce,
He knew nat that she was constrained,
Ne of her theeves life fained,
But wende she come of will all free,
But she come in another degree,
And if of good will she began,
That will was failed her than.

And False Semblant had he seene also,

But he knew nat that he was false,
Yet false was he, but his falsenesse
Ne coulde he not espie, nor gesse,
For Semblant was so slie wrought,
That falsenesse he ne espyed nought:
But haddest thou knowen him beforne,
Thou wouldest on a booke have sworne,
Whan thou him saw in thilke arraie
That he, that whilome was so gaie,
And of the daunce Jolly Robin
Was tho become a Jacobin:
But soothly what so men him call
Frere preachours been good men all,
Hir order wickedly they bearen
Such ministreles if they weren.

So been Augustins, and Cordileres,
And Carmes, and eke sacked freres,
And all freres shode and bare,
Though some of hem ben great and square,
Full holy men, as I hem deem,
Everich of hem would good man seem:
But shalt thou never of apparence
Seene conclude good consequence
In none argument ywis,
If existence all failed is:
For men may finde alway sopheme
The consequence to enveneme,
Who so that hath had the subtiltee
The double sentence for to see.

Whan the pilgrimes comen were
To Wicked Tongue that dwelleth there,
Hir harneis nigh hem was algate,
By Wicked tongue adoun they sate,
That bad hem nere him for to come,

And of tidinges tell him some,
And sayd hem : “ What case maketh you
To come into this place now ? ”

“ SIR,” sayed strained Abstinence,
“ We for to drie our penance,
With hertes pitous and devout,
Are commen, as pilgrimes gone about,
Well nigh on foote alway we go
Full doughty been our heeles two,
And thus both we ben sent
Throughout the world that is miswent,
To yeve ensample, and preach also,
To fishen sinfull men we go,
For other fishing, ne fish we,
And, sir, for that charite,
As we be wont, herborow we crave,
Your life to amende Christ it save,
And so it should you not displease,
We woulden, if it were your ease,
A short sermon unto you sain.
And Wicked Tongue answered again,

“ The house ” (quod he) “ such (as ye see)
Shall not be warned you for me,
Saie what you list, and I woll heare.”

“ Graunt mercie sweet sir deare,”
(Quod alderfirst) “ dame Abstinence,”
And thus began she her sentence.

“ Sir, the first vertue certaine,
The greatest, and most soveraigne
That may be found in any man,
For having, or for wit he can,
That is his tongue to refraine,
Thereto ought everie wight him paine:

For it is better still be,
Than for to speaken harme parde,
And he that hearkeneth it gladly,
He is no good man sikerly.

“ And sir, aboven all other sin,
In that art thou most guiltie in :
Thou speake a jape, not long ago.

“ And sir, that was right evill do
Of a young man, that here repaired,
And never yet this place apaired :
Thou saidest he awaited nothing,
But to deceive Faire Welcoming :
Ye sayd nothing sooth of that,
But sir, ye lye, I tell ye plat,
He ne cometh no more, ne goeth parde,
I trow ye shall him never see ;
Faire Welcoming in prison is,
That oft hath played with you er this,
The fairest games that he coude,
Without filth, still or loude.
Now dare she not her selfe solace,
Ye han also the man doe chase,
That he dare neither come ne go,
What mooveth you to hate him so ?
But properly your wicked thought,
That many a false lesing hath thought,
That mooveth your foule eloquence,
That jangleth ever in audience,
And on the folke ariseth blame,
And doth hem dishonour and shame,
For thing that may have no preving,
But likeliness, and contriving.

“ For I dare saine, that Reason deemeth,
It is not all sooth thing that seemeth,

And it is sinne to controve
Thing that is to reprove ;
This wote ye wele, and sir, therefore
Ye arn to blame the more,
And nathelesse, he recketh lite
He yeveth not now thereof a mite,
For if he thought harme, parfay,
He would come and gone all day,
He coud himselfe not absteine,
Now cometh he not, and that is sene,
For he ne taketh of it no cure,
But if it be through aventure,
And lasse than other folke algate,
And thou here watchest at the gate,
With speare in thine arest alwaie,
There muse musard all the daie,
Thou wakest night and day for thought,
Ywis thy travaile is for nought,
And Jelousie withouten faile,
Shall never quit thee thy travaile,
And skathe is, that Faire Welcoming,
Without any trespassing,
Shall wrongfully in prison be,
There weepeth and languisheth he,
And though thou never yet ywis,
Agiltest man no more but this,
Take not a greefe it were worthy
To put thee out of this baily,
And afterward in prison lie,
And fettred thee till that thou die ;
For thou shalt for this sinne dwell
Right in the Divels arse of Hell,
But if that thou repent thee :
Ma fay, thou lyest falsely." (Quod he)

“What, welcome with mischaunce now,
Have I therefore herbourd you
To say me shame, and eke reprove,
With sorrie happe to your behove,
Am I to day your herbegere
Go herber you elsewhere than here,
That han a lyer called me,
Two tregetours art thou and he,
That in mine house doe me this shame,
And for my sooth saw ye me blame.
Is this the sermon that ye make ?
To all the divels I me take,
Or else God thou me confound,
But er men didden this castle found,
It passed not ten dayes of twelve,
But it was told right to my selve,
And as they sayd, right so told I,
He kist the rose privily :
Thus sayd I now, and have sayd yore,
I n’ot where he did any more.
Why should men say me such a thing,
If it had been gabbing ?
Right so saide I, and woll say yet,
I trow I lyed not of it,
And with my bemes I woll blow
To all neighbours a row,
How he hath both comen and gone.”

The spake False Semblant right anone,
“All is not gospell out of dout,
That men saine in the towne about,
Lay no deafe eare to my speaking,
I swere you, sir, it is gabbing,
I trow you wote well certainly,
That no man loveth him tenderly,

That sayth him harme, if he wote it,
All be he never so poore of wit ;
And sooth is also sikerly,
This know ye, sir, as well as I,
That lovers gladly woll visiten
The places there hir loves habiten :
This man you loveth and eke honoureth,
This man to serve you laboureth,
And clepeth you his freind so deere,
And this man maketh you good cheere,
And everie man that you meeteth,
He you saleweth, and he you greeteth ;
He preseth not so oft, that ye
Ought of his comming encombred be :
There presen other folke on you,
Full ofter than he doth now,
And if his herte him strained so
Unto the rose for to go,
Ye should him seene so ofte need,
That ye should take him with the deed ;
He coud his comming not forbear,
Though ye him thrilled with a speare ;
It n'ere not than as it is now,
But trusteth well, I sweare it you,
That it is clene out of his thought.
Sir, certes he ne thinketh it nought,
No more ne doth Faire Welcomming,
That sore abieth all this thing :
And if they were of one assent,
Full soone were the rose hent,
The maugre yours would be.

“ And sir, of o thing hearkeneth me,
Sith ye this man, that loveth you,
Han sayd such harme and shame, now

Witteth well, if he gessed it,
Ye may well demen in your wit,
He n'olde nothing love you so,
Ne callen you his friend also,
But night and daie he woll wake,
The castle to destroy and take,
If it were sooth, as ye devise;
Or some man in some manner wise
Might it warne him everidele,
Or by himselfe perceive wele,
For sith he might not come and gone
As he was whilom wont to done,
He might it soone wite and see,
But now all otherwise wote hee.

“Than have ye, sir, all utterly
Deserved Hell, and jollyly
The death of Hell doubtlesse,
That thrallen folke so guiltlesse.”

False Semblant so prooveth this thing,
That he can none answering,
And seeth alwaie such apparaunce,
That nigh he fell in repentaunce,
And sayd him, “Sir, it may well be.
Semblant, a good man seemen ye,
And Abstinence, full wise ye seeme,
Of o talent you both I deeme,
What counsaile woll ye to me yeven?”

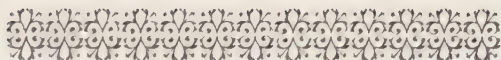
“Right here anon thou shalt be shriven
And say thy sinne without more,
Of this shalt thou repent sore,
For I am priest, and have poste,
To shrive folke of most dignite
That ben as wide as world may dure,
Of all this world I have the cure,

And that had never yet persoun,
Ne vicarie of no manner toun.

“ And God wote I have of thee,
A thousand times more pitee,
Than bath thy priest parochiall
Though he thy friend be speciall.

“ I have avauntage, in o wise,
That your priests be not so wise
Ne halfe so lettred (as am I)
I am licensed boldly,
In divinitie for to read,
And to confessen out of dread.

“ If ye woll you now confesse,
And leave your sinnes more and lesse,
Without abode, kneele doune anon,
And you shall have absolution.”



TROILUS AND CRESEIDE.

INCIPIT LIBER PRIMUS.

THE double sorrow of Troilus to tellen,
That was kinge Priamus sonne of Troy,
In loving, how his adventures fellen
From woe to wele, and after out of joy,
My purpose is, er that I part froy.
Thou Thesiphone, thou helpe me for t'endite
These wofull verses, that wepen as I write.

To thee I clepe, thou goddessse of tourment
Thou cruell furie, sorrowing ever in paine,
Helpe me that am the sorrowfull instrument,
That helpeth lovers, as I can complaine :
For well sit it, the sooth for to saine,
A wofull wight to have a drery fere,
And to a sorrowfull tale a sorrie chere.

For I that god of loves servantes serve,
Ne dare to love, for mine unlikelynesse,
Prayen for speed, all should I therefore sterve,
So farre am I fro his helpe in derkenesse.
But nathelesse, if this may done gladnesse
To any lover, and his cause availe,
Have be my thanke, and mine be the travaile.

But ye lovers that bathen in gladnesse,
If any droppe of pite in you be,
Remembreth you of passed heavinesse
That ye have felt, and on the adversite
Of other folke, and thinketh how that ye
Han felt, that Love durst you displease,
Else ye han won him with too great an ease.

And prayeth for hem that been in the case
Of Troilus, as ye may after heare,
That he hem bring in Heaven to solace.
And eke for me prayeth to God so deare,
That I have might to shew in some manere,
Such paine and woe, as Loves folke endure,
In Troilus unsely aventure.

And biddeth eke for hem that ben dispeired
In love, that never will recovered be :
And eke for hem that falsely ben apeired,
Through wicked tongues, be it he or she :
Thus biddeth God for his benignite,
So grant hem sone out of this world to pace
That ben dispeired out of Loves grace.

And biddeth eke for hem that ben at ease,
That God hem graunt aie good perseverance,
And send hem grace hir loves for to please,
That it to love be worship and pleasaunce :
For so hope I my selfe best to avaunce
To pray for hem, that Loves servaunts be,
And write hir woe, and live in charite.

And for to have of hem compassioun,
As though I were hir owne brother dere,
Now hearkeneth with a good ententioun,
For now woll I go straight to my matere :

In which ye may the double sorrowes here
Of Troilus, in loving of Creseide,
And how she forsoke him er that she deide.

It is well wist, how that the Greekes strong
In armes with a thousand shippes went
To Troie wardes, and the citie long
Besiegeden, nigh ten yeres ere they stent,
And how in divers wise, and one entent,
The ravishing to wreake of queen Heleine,
By Paris don, they wroughten all hir peine.

Now fell it so, that in the tounne there was
Dwelling a lord of great authorite
A great divine that cleped was Calcas,
That in science so expert was, that he
Knew well, that Troie should destroyed be,
By answeere of his god, that hight thus,
Dan Phebus, or Apollo Delphicus.

So whan this Calcas knew by calculing,
And eke by the answeere of this god Apollo,
That the Greekes should such a people bring,
Thorow the which that Troy must be fordo,
He cast anone out of the tounne to go :
For well he wist by sort, that Troie sholde
Destroyed be, ye would who so or n'olde.

Wherefore he to departen softly,
Tooke purpose full, this forknowing wise,
And to the Greekes host full prively
He stale anone, and they in courteous wise
Did to him both worship and servise,
In trust that he hath cunning hem to rede
In every perill, which that was to drede.

Great rumour rose, whan it was first espied,
In all the toune, and openly was spoken,
That Calcas traitour fled was and alied
To hem of Grece: and cast was to be wroken
On him, that falsely hath his faith broken,
And sayd, he and all his kinne atones,
Were worthy to be brent, both fell and bones.

Now had Calcas lefte in this mischaunce,
Unwist of this false and wicked dede,
A daughter, whiche was in great penaunce,
And of her life she was full sore in drede,
And wist ne never what best was to rede:
And as a widdow was she, and all alone,
And n'iste to whome she might make her mone.

Creseide was this ladies name aright,
As to my dome, in all Troies cite
Most fairest ladie, far passing every wight
So angelike shone her native beaute,
That no mortall thing seemed she:
And therewith was she so perfect a creature,
As she had be made in scorning of nature.

This ladie, that all day hearde at eare
Her fathers shame, falshede, and treasoun,
(Full nigh out of her wit for sorrow and feare,
In widdowes habite large of samite brown)
Before Hector on knees she fell adown,
And his mercy bad, her selfe excusing,
With pitous voice, and tenderly weeping.

Now was this Hector pitous of nature,
And saw that she was sorrowfull begone,
And that she was so faire a creature,
Of his goodnesse he gladed her anone,

And said : “ Let your fathers traison gone
Forth with mischance, and ye your selfe in joy
Dwelleth with us while you list in Troy.

“ And all the honour that men may do you have,
As ferforth as though your father dwelt here,
Ye shull have, and your body shull men save,
As ferre as I may ought enquire and here :”
And she him thanked with full humble chere,
And ofter would, and it had been his will.
She took her leve, went home, and held her still.

And in her house she abode with such meine
As til her honour nede was to hold,
And while she was dwelling in that cite,
She kept her estate, and of yong and old
Full well beloved, and men well of her told :
But whether that she children had or none,
I rede it nat, therefore I let it gone.

The thinges fellen as they don of werre,
Betwixen hem of Troy and Greekes oft,
For sometime brougten they of Troy it derre,
And ofte the Greekes founden nothing soft
The folke of Troy : and thus fortune aloft,
And under ofte gan hem to whelmen both,
After her course, aie while that they were wroth.

But how this toune came to destruction,
Ne falleth not to purpose me to tell,
For it were a long digression
Fro my matter, and you too long to dwell ;
But the Troyan jestes all as they fell,
In Omer, or in Dares, or in Dite,
Who so that can, may reden hem as they write.

But though the Greekes hem of Troy in shetten,
And hir citie besieged all about,
Hir old usages nolde they not letten,
As to honouren hir gods full devout,
But aldermost in honour out of dout,
They had a relike hight Palladion,
That was hir trust aboven everychon.

And so befell, whan comen was the time
Of Aprill, whan clothed is the mede,
With new grene, of lustie veer the prime,
And with sweet smelling floures white and rede
In sundrie wise shewed, as I rede,
The folke of Troie, their observances old,
Palladions feast went for to hold.

Unto the temple in all their best wise,
Generally there went many a wight,
To hearken of Palladions servise,
And namely many a lustie knight,
And many a ladie fresh, and maiden bright,
Full well arraied bothe most and least,
Both for the season and the high feast.

Among these other folke was Creseida,
In widdowes habite blacke : but natheles
Right as our first letter is now an a,
In beautie first so stood she makeles,
Her goodly looking gladed all the prees,
Nas never seene thing to be praised so derre,
Nor under cloude blacke so bright a sterre,

As was Creseide, they sayden everichone,
That her behelden in her blacke wede,
And yet she stood full lowe and still alone
Behinde other folke in little brede,

And nie the dore under shames drede,
Simple of attire, and debonaire of chere,
With full assured looking and manere.

This Troilus, as he was wont to guide
His yonge knightes, lad hem up and doune,
In thilke large temple on every side,
Beholding aie the ladies of the tounne,
Now here now there, for no devotioun e
Had he to none, to reven him his rest,
But gan to praise and lacke whom him lest.

And in his walk full fast he gan to waiten,
If knight or squier of his companie,
Gan for to sike, or let his eyen baiten
On any woman, that he coud espie,
He would smile, and hold it a follie,
And say hem thus : “ O Lord she sleepeth soft
For love of thee, whan thou turnest full oft.

“ I have heard tell pardicux of your living,
Ye lovers, and eke your lewde observances,
And which a labour folke have in winning
Of love, and in keeping such dountaunces,
And whan your pray is lost, wo and penaunces :
O, very fooles, blinde and nice be ye,
There is not one can ware by another be.”

And with that word he gan cast up the brow,
Ascaunces, lo, is this not well yspoken,
At which the god of love gan looken low,
Right for dispite, and shope him to be wroken.
He kidde anone his bowe was not broken :
For sodainly he hitte him at the full,
And yet as proude a peacocke gan he pull.

O blinde world, o blind entention,
How often falleth all the effect contraire
Of surquedrie and foule presumption,
For caught is proud, and caught is debonaire :
This Troilus is clomben on the staire,
And little weneth that he mote descenden,
But all day it faileth that fooles wenden.

As proud Bayard beginneth for to skippe
Out of the way, so pricketh him his corne,
Till he a lash have of the longe whippe,
Than thinketh he, "Tho I prounce all beforne
First in the traise, full fat and new yshorne,
Yet am I but an horse, and horses law
I must endure, and with my feeres draw."

So fared it by this fiers and proud knight,
Though he a worthy kinges sonne were,
And wende nothing had had suche might,
Ayenst his will, that should his herte stere,
Yet with a looke his herte woxe on fire,
That he that now was most in pride above,
Woxe sodainly most subject unto love.

Forthy ensample taketh of this man,
Ye wise, proud, and worthy folkes all,
To scornen Love, which that so soone can
The freedome of your hertes to him thrall,
For ever it was, and ever it be shall,
That Love is he that all thinges may bind,
For no man may fordo the law of kind.

That this be sooth hath preved and doth yet,
For this (I trowe) ye know all and some,
Men reden not that folke han greater wit
Than they that han ben most with love ynome,

And strengest folk been therewith overcome,
The worthiest and greatest of degree,
This was and is, and yet man shall it see.

And trueliche that sitte well to be so,
For alderwisest han therewith ben pleased,
And they that han ben aldermost in wo,
With love han ben comforted and most eased,
And oft it hath the cruell herte appeased,
And worthy folke made worthier of name,
And causeth most to dreden vice and shame.

Now sith it may nat goodly be withstond,
And is a thing so vertuous and kind,
Refuseth nought to Love for to ben bond,
Sith as him selven list he may you bind ;
The yerde is bette that bowen woll and wind
Than that that brest, and therefore I you rede,
Now followeth him, that so well can you lede.

But for to tellen forth in speciall,
As of this kinges sonne, of which I told,
And leven other thing collaterall,
Of him thinke I my tale forth to hold,
Both of his joy, and of his cares cold,
And his werke, as touching this matere,
For I it gan, I woll thereto refere.

Within the temple he went him forth playing
This Troilus, of every wight about,
Now on this lady, and now on that looking,
Where so she were of toune, or of without :
And upon case befell, that through a rout
His eye peirced, and so deepe it went
Till on Creseide it smote, and there it stent.

And sodainely for wonder wext astonned,
And gan her bet behold in thrifty wise :
“ O very God,” thought he, “ wher hast thou
wonned,

That art so faire and goodly to devise ?”
Therewith his herte gan to spread and rise,
And softe sighed, least men might him here,
And caught ayen his firste playing chere.

She n’as nat with the most of her stature,
But all her limmes so well answering
Weren to womanhood, that creature
Was never lasse mannish in seeming.
And eke the pure wise of her meaning
Shewed well, that men might in her gesse
Honour, estate, and womanly noblesse.

Tho Troilus, right wonder well withall,
Gan for to like her meaning and her chere,
Which somdele deignous was, for she let fall
Her looke a little aside, in such manere
Ascaunces, what may I not stonden here,
And after that her looking gan she light,
That never thought him seen so good a sight.

And of her looke in him there gan to quicken
So great desire, and such affection,
That in his hertes bottome gan to sticken
Of her his fixe, and deepe impression :
And though he earst had pored up and doun,
Than was he glad his hornes in to shrinken,
Unnethes wist he how to looke or winke.

Lo, he that lete him selven so cunning,
And scorned hem that loves paines drien,
Was full unware that Love had his dwelling

Within the subtill streames of her eyen,
That sodainely him thought he felte dyen,
Right with her looke, the spirite in his hert,
Blessed be Love, that thus can folke convert.

She thus in blacke, liking to Troilus,
Over all thing he stood for to behold :
But his desire, ne wherefore he stood thus,
He neither chere made, ne worde told,
But from aferre, his manner for to hold,
On other thing sometime his looke he cast,
And eft on her, while that the service last :

And after this, nat fulliche all awhaped,
Out of the temple eselich he went,
Repenting him that ever he had ever japed
Of Loves folke, least fully the discent
Of scorne fell on himselfe, but what he ment,
Lest it were wist on any manner side,
His woe he gan dissimulen and hide.

Whan he was fro the temple thus departed,
He straight anone unto his pallace turneth,
Right with her loke through shotten and darted,
All faineth he in lust that he sojourneth,
And all his chere and speech also he bourneth,
And aie of Loves servaunts every while
Him selfe to wrie, at hem he gan to smile,

And saied, " Lord, so they live all in lust
Ye lovers, for the cunningest of you,
That serveth most ententifelich and best
Him tite as often harne thereof as prow,
Your hire is quit ayen, ye, God wote how,
Not wele for wele, but scorne for good servise,
In faith your order is ruled in good wise.

“ In no certaine been your observaunces,
But it onely a sely few points be.
Ne nothing asketh so great attendaunces,
As doth your laie. and that know all ye :
But that is not the worst. as mote I the,
But told I you the worst point, I leve.
All sayd I sooth, ye woulden at me greve.

“ But take this : that ye lovers oft eschew,
Or else done of good entention.
Full oft thy ladie woll it misse constrew,
And deeme it harme in her opinion,
And yet if she for other encheson
Be wroth, than shalt thou have a groin anon :
Lord, well is him that may been of you one.”

But for all this, whan that he seeth his time
He held his peace, none other bote him gained,
For Love began his feathers so to lime,
That well unneth unto his folke he fained,
That other busie needes him distrained,
So woe was him, that what to done he n’st,
But bad his folke to gon where as hem list.

And whan that he in chamber was alone,
He doune upon his beddes feet him set,
And first he gan to sike, and eft to grone,
And thought aie on her so withouten let,
That as he sate and woke, his spirit met
That he her saw and temple, and all the wise
Right of her looke, and gan it new avise.

Thus gan he make a mirrour of his mind,
In which he saw all wholly her figure,
And that he well coud in his herte find
It was to him a right good aventure

To love such one, and if he did his cure
To serven her, yet might he fall in grace,
Or else, for one of her servantes pace.

Imagining, that travaile nor grame
Ne might for so goodly one be lorne
As she, ne him for his desire no shame
All were it wist, but in prise and up borne
Of all lovers, well more than beforne.
Thus argumented he, in his ginning,
Full unavised of his wo comming.

Thus took he purpose Loves craft to sewe
And thought he would worken privily
First for to hide his desire in mewe
From everie wight iborne, all overly,
But he might ought recovered been thereby,
Remembring him, that love too wide yblowe
Yelte bitter fruite, though sweet seed be sowe.

And over all this, full mokell more he thought
What for to speake, and what to holden inne
And what to arten, er to love he sought,
And on a song anone right to beginne,
And gan loude on his sorrow for to winne :
For with good hope he gan fully assent,
Creseide for to love, and nought repent.

And of his song not onely his sentence,
As write mine authour called Lolius,
But plainely save our tongues difference,
I dare well say, in all that Troilus
Sayed in his song, lo every word right thus,
As I shall saine, and who so list it heare
Lo this next verse, he may it finde there.

THE SONG OF TROILUS.

“ If no love is, O God, what feele I so ?
And if love is, what thing and which is he ?
If love be good, from whence cometh my wo ?
If it be wicke, a wonder thinketh me,
Whan every torment and adversite
That cometh of him, may to me savery think :
For aie thirst I the more that iche it drinke.

“ And if that at mine owne lust I brenne,
From whence cometh my wailing and my plaint :
If harme agree me, whereto plaine I thenne,
I n’ot, ne why unwery that I feint.
O quicke death, o sweete harme so queint,
How may of thee in me be such quantite,
But if that I consent that it so be ?

“ And if that I consent, I wrongfully
Complaine ywis : thus possed to and fro,
All sterelesse within a bote am I
Amidde the sea, atwixen windes two,
That in contrary stonden ever mo.
Alas, what is this wonder maladie ?
For heat of cold, for cold of heat I die.”

And to the god of love thus sayed he
With pitous voice, “ O lord, now yours is
My spirite, which that oughten yours to be,
You thank I, lord, that han me brought to this :
But whether goddesse or woman ywis
She be, I n’ot, which that ye do me serve,
But as her man I woll aie live and sterve.

“ Ye stonden in her eyen mightily,
As in a place to your vertue digne :
Wherefore, lord, if my servise or I

May liken you, so beth to me benigne,
For mine estate royall here I resigne
Into her honde, and with full humble cheer,
Become her man, as to my lady deer."

In him ne deigned sparen blood royall
The fire of love, wherefro God me blesse,
Ne him forbare in no degree, for all
His vertue, or his excellent prowesse,
But held him as his thrall lowe in distresse,
And brend him so in sundry wise aie newe,
That sixty times a day he lost his hewe.

So mochell day fro day his owne thought
For lust to her gan quicken and encrease,
That everiche other charge he set at nought,
Forthy full oft, his hot fire to cease,
To seen her goodly looke he gan to prease,
For thereby to ben eased well he wend,
And aie the nere he was, the more he brend.

For aie the nere the fire the hotter is,
This (trow I) knoweth all this companie :
But were he ferre or nere, I dare say this,
By night or day, for wisdom or follie,
His herte, which that is his brestes eie,
Was aie on her, that fairer was to seene
Than ever was Heleine, or Polixene.

Eke of the day there passed not an hour,
That to himselfe a thousand times he sayd,
"God goodly, to whome I serve and labour
As I best can, now would to God Creseide
Ye woulde on me rue, er that I deide :
My dere herte alas, mine hele and my hew,
And life is lost, but ye woll on me rew."

All other dredes weren from him fled,
Both of th'assiege, and his savation,
Ne in desire none other formes bred,
But arguments to his conclusion,
That she on him would have compassion
And he to ben her man, while he may dure,
Lo here his life, and from his death his cure.

The sharpe showers fell of armes preve
That Hector or his other brethren didden
Ne made him onely therefore ones meve,
And yet was he, where so men went or ridden,
Found one the best, and lengest time abiden
There perill was, and eke did such travaile
In armes, that to thinke it was a marvaile.

But for none hate he to the Greekes had,
Ne also for the rescous of the toun,
Ne made him thus in armes for to mad,
But onely lo, for this conclusioun,
To liken her the bet for his renoun :
Fro day to day in armes so he sped,
That all the Greekes as the death him dred.

And fro this forth tho reft him love his slepe
And made his meate his foe, and eke his sorrow
Gan multiply, that who so tooke keepe,
It shewed in his hew both even and morow :
Therefore a title he gan him for to borow
Of other sickennesse, least men of him wend
That the hot fire of love him breed.

And sayd he had a fever, and fared amis,
But were it certaine I cannot sey
If that his lady understood not this
Or fained her she n'ist, one of the twey :

But well rede I, that by no manner wey
Ne seemed it that she on him rought,
Or of his paine, what so ever he thought.

But than felt this Troilus suche wo
That he was welnigh wood, for aie his drede
Was this, that she some wight loved so,
That never of him she would han take heed :
For which him thought he felt his herte bleed,
Ne of his woe ne durst he nought begin
To tellen her, for all this world to win.

But whan he had a space left from his care,
Thus to himselfe full oft he gan to plaine :
He sayd, “ O foole, now art thou in the snare,
That whilom japedest at lovers pain :
Now art thou hent, now gnaw thine owne chain ;
Thou wert aie woned ech lover reprehend
Of thing fro which thou canst not thee defend.

“ What woll now every lover saine of thee,
If this be wist ? But ever in thine absence
Laughen in scorn, and saine, lo there goeth he
That is the man of greate sapience,
That held us lovers least in reverence :
Now thanked be God, he may gon on that daunce
Of hem that Love list feebly avaunce.

“ But o, thou wofull Troilus, God would,
(Sith thou must loven, through thy destine)
That thou beset wer of soch one, that should
Know all thy wo, all lacked her pitee :
But all too cold in love towards thee
Thy ladie is, as frost in winter Moone,
And thou fordo, as snow in fire is soone.

“ God would I were arrived in the port
Of death, to which my sorow woll me lede :
Ah lord, to me it were a great comfort,
Than were I quite of languishing in drede :
For by my hidde sorrow iblowe in brede,
I shall bejaped been a thousand time,
More than that foole, of whose folly men rime.

“ But now help God, and ye my sweet, for whom
I plaine, ycaught ye never wight so fast :
O mercie, deare herte, and helpe me from
The death, for I, while that my life may last,
More than my selfe woll love you to my last,
And with some frendly look gladeth me swete,
Though never more thing ye to me behete.”

These wordes, and full many another mo
He spake, and called ever in his compleint
Her name, for to tellen her his wo,
Till nigh that he in salte teares was dreint,
All was for nought, she heard nat his pleint :
And whan that he bethought on that follie,
A thousand fold his woe gan multiplie.

Bewailing in his chamber thus alone,
A friend of his, that called was Pandare,
Came ones in unware, and heard him grone,
And saw his friend in such distresse and care :
“ Alas,” (quod he) “ who causeth all this fare ?
O mercy God, what unhappe may this mene ?
Han now thus sone the Greeks made you lene ?

“ Or hast thou some remorse of conscience ?
And art now fall in some devotion,
And wailest for thy sinne and thine offence,
And hast for ferde caught contrition ?

God save hem, that besieged han our toun,
That so can laie our jollitie on presse,
And bring our lustie folke to holynesse."

These wordes said he for the nones all,
That with such thing he might him angry maken,
And with his anger done his sorrow fall,
As for a time, and his courage awaken :
But well wist he, as far as tongues spoken,
There nas a man of greater hardinesse
Than he, ne more desired worthinesse.

"What cas," (quod Troilus) "or what aventure
Hath guided thee to seen me languishing,
That am refuse of everie creature?
But for the love of God, at me praying
Goe hence away, for certes my dying
Woll thee disease, and I mote nedes deie,
Therefore goe way, there u'is no more to seie.

"But if thou wene, I be thus sick for drede,
It is not so, and therefore scorne nought :
There is an other thing I take of hede,
Welmore than ought the Grekes han yet wrought,
Which cause is of my deth for sorow and thought :
But though that I now tell it thee ne lest,
Be thou not wroth, I hide it for the best."

This Pandare, that nigh malt for wo and routh,
Full often sayed, "Alas, what may this be ?
"Now friend," (quod he) "if ever love or trouth
Hath been er this betwixen thee and me,
Ne doe thou never such a cruelte,
To hiden fro thy friend so great a care,
Wost thou not well that I am Pandare ?

“ I woll parten with thee all thy paine,
If it so be I doe thee no comfort,
As it is friendes right, sooth for to saine,
To enterparten woe, as glad disport
I have and shall, for true or false report,
In wrong and right yloved thee all my live,
Hide not thy woe fro me, but tell it blive.”

Than gan this sorrowfull Troilus to sike,
And sayd him thus, “ God leve it be my best
To tellen thee, for sith it may thee like,
Yet woll I tell it, though my herte brest,
And well wote I, thou maïest do me no rest,
But least thou deeme I trust not to thee
Now hearke friend, for thus it stant with me.

“ Love, ayenst the which who so defendeth
Him selven most, him alderlest availeth,
With dispaire so sorrowfully me offendeth
That straight unto the death my herte faileth :
Thereto desire, so brenningly me assaileth,
That to been slaine, it were a greater joy
To me, than king of Grece be and of Troy.

“ Suffiseth this, my full friende Pandare,
That I have said, for now wotest thou my wo :
And for the love of God my colde care
So hide it well, I told it never to mo :
For harmes mighten followen mo than two
If it were wist, but be thou in gladnesse,
And let me sterve unknowne of my distresse.”

“ How hast thou thus unkindly and long
Hid this fro me, thou fool ?” (quod Pandarus)
“ Peraventure thou maist after such one long,
That mine avise anone may helpen us :”

“ This were a wonder thing,” (quod Troilus)
“ Thou couldest never in love thy selfen wisse,
How divell maiest thou bringen me to blisse.”

“ Ye Troilus, now hearken,” (quod Pandare)
“ Though I be nice, it happeth often so,
That one that of axes doeth full evil fare,
By good counsail can keep his frend ther fro :
I have my selfe seen a blinde man go
There as he fell, that could looken wide,
A foole may eke a wise man oft guide.

“ A whetstone is no carving instrument,
But yet it maketh sharpe kerving tolis,
And after thou wost that I have aught miswent,
Eschue thou that, for such thing to schole is,
Thus often wise men bewaren by foolis :
If thou so doe, thy wit is well bewared,
By his contrarie is everie thing declared.

“ For how might ever sweetnesse have be know
To him, that never tasted bitternesse ?
No manne wot what gladnesse is I trow,
That never was in sorrow, or some distresse :
Eke white by blacke, by shame eke worthines,
Each set by other, more for other seemeth,
As men may seen, and so the wise it deemeth.

“ Sith thus of two contraries is o lore,
I that have in love so oft assayed
Gregaunces, ought connen well the more
Counsailen thee of that thou art dismayed,
And eke the ne ought not been evill apaied,
Though I desire with thee for to beare
Thine heavie charge, it shall thee lasse deare.

“ I wote well that it fared thus by me,
As to thy brother Paris, an hierdesse,
Which that yeleped was Oenone,
Wrote in a complaint of her heavinesse :
Ye saw the letter that she wrote I gesse.”

“ Nay never yet ywis,” (quod Troilus.)
“ Now” (quod Pandare) “ hearkeneth, it was thus :

“ ‘ Phebus, that first found art of medicine,’
(Quod she) ‘ and coud in everie wightes care
Remedie and rede, by herbes he knew fine,
Yet to himselfe his cunning was full bare,
For love had him so bounden in a snare,
All for the daughter of king Admete,
That all his craft ne coud his sorrow bete.’

“ Right so fare I, unhappie for me,
I love one best, and that me smerteth sore :
And yet peradventure can I reden thee
And nat my selfe : reprove me no more,
I have no cause I wote well for to sore,
As doeth an hauke, that listeth for to play,
But to thine helpe, yet somewhat can I say.

“ And of o thing, right siker mayest thou be,
That certaine for to dyen in the paine
That I shall never mo discover thee,
Ne by my trouth, I keepe nat to restraine
Thee fro thy love, although it were Helleine,
That is thy brothers wife, if iche it wist,
Be what she be, and love her as thee list.

“ Therefore as friendfullich in me assure,
And tell me platte, what is thine encheson,
And finall cause of woe, that ye endure :
For doubteth nothing, mine entention

Nas not to you of reprehension
To speake, as now, for no wight may bereve
A man to love, till that him list to leve.

“ And weteth well, that both two been vicis,
Mistrusten all, or else all beleve :
But well I wote, the meane of it no vice is,
As for to trusten some wight is a preve
Of trouth, and forthy would I faine remove
Thy wrong conceit, and do the some wight trust
Thy woe to tell : and tell me if thou lust.

“ The wise eke sayth, woe him that is alone,
For and he fall, he hath none helpe to rise :
And sith thou hast a fellow, tell thy mone,
For this n’is nought certaine the next wise
To winnen love, as teachen us the wise,
To wallow and weep, as Niobe the queene,
Whose teares yet in marble been yscene.

“ Let be thy weeping, and thy drerinesse,
And let us lesen woe with other speech,
So may thy wofull time seeme the lesse ;
Delighte nought in woe, thy woe to seech,
As doen these fooles, that hir sorrowes eche
With sorrowe, whan they han misaventure,
And lusten nought to seechen other cure.

“ Men saine, to wretch is consolation
To have another fellow in his paine :
That ought well been our opinion,
For bothe thou and I of love doe plaine,
So full of sorrow am I, sooth to saine,
That certainly, as now no more hard grace
May sit on me, for why, there is no space.

“ If God woll, thou art nought agast of me,
Least I would of thy ladie thee beguile :
Thou wost thy selfe, whom that I love parde
As I best can, gone sithen longe while,
And sithen thou wost, I doe it for no wile,
And sith I am he, that thou trusteth most,
Tell me somewhat, since all my woe thou wost.”

Yet Troilus, for all this no word said,
But long he laie still, as he dead were,
And after this, with siking he abraid,
And to Pandarus voice he lent his care,
And up his eyen cast he : and than in feare
Was Pandarus least that in frenseye,
He should either fall or else soone deye.

And sayd, “ Awake,” full wonderlich and sharpe,
“ What slumbrest thou, as in a litargie ?
Or art thou like an asse to the harpe,
That heareth sound, whan men the stringes ply,
But in his mind, of that no melodie
May sinke him to gladen, for that he
So dull is, in his bestialite ?”

And with this Pandare of his wordes stent :
But Troilus to him nothing answerde,
For why, to tell was nought his entent
Never to no man, for whome that he so ferde :
For it is sayd, men maken oft a yerde
With which the maker is himselfe ybeten
In sundrie manner, as these wise men treten.

And nameliche in his counsaile telling,
That toucheth love, that ought been secre :
For of himselfe it woll inough out spring
But if that it the bet governed be.

Eke sometime it is craft to seeme flee
Fro thing which in effect men huntē fast :
All this gan Troilus in his herte cast.

But natheles, whan he had heard him crie,
Awake he gan, and sike wonder sore :
And sayd, “ My friende, though that I still lie,
I am not deefe, now peace and crie no more :
For I have heard thy wordes and thy lore,
But suffer me my fortune to bewailen,
For thy proverbes may nought me availen.

“ Nor other cure canst thou none for me,
Eke I n’ill not been cured, I woll die :
What know I of the queene Niobe ?
Let be thine old ensamples, I thee prey.”
“ No friend,” (quod Pandarus) “ therfore I sey,
Such is delight of fooles to beweepe
Hir woe, but to seeken bote they ne keepe.

“ Now know I that reason in thee faileth :
But tell me, if I wiste what she were
For whome that thee all misaventure aileth,
Durst thou that I told it in her eare
Thy woe, sith thou darst not thy self for fear,
And her besought on thee to han some routh ?”
“ Why, nay,” (quod he) “ by God and by my
trouth.”

“ What, not as busily” (quod Pandarus)
“ As though mine owne life lay in this need ?”
“ Why, no parde, sir,” (quod this Troilus.)
“ And why ?”—“ For that thou shouldest never
speed.” [dreed,”

“ Wost thou that well ?”—“ Ye, that is out of
(Quod Troilus) “ for all that ever ye comne,
She woll to no such wretch as I be wonne.”

(Quod Pandarus) " Alas what may this be,
That thou dispaired art, thus causelesse ?
What, liveth nat thy ladie, benedicite ?
How wost thou so, that thou art gracelesse ?
Such evill is not alway botelesse :
Why, put not thus impossible thy cure,
Sith thing to come is oft in aventure.

" I graunt weil that thou endurest wo,
As sharpe as doth he Tesiphus in Hell,
Whose stomacke foules tiren evermo,
That highten vultures, as bookes tell :
But I may not endure that thou dwell
In so unskilfull an opinion,
That of thy woe n'is no curation.

" But ones n'll thou, for thy coward herte,
And for thine yre, and foolish wilfulnesse,
For wantrust tellen of thy sorrowes smert,
Ne to thine owne helpe do businesse,
As much as speake a word, yea more or lesse,
But lyest as he that of life nothing retch,
What woman living coud love such a wretch ?

" What may she demen other of thy death,
If thou thus die, and she n'ot why it is,
But that for feare, is yolden up thy breath,
For Greekes han besieged us ywis ?
Lord, which a thank shalt thou have than of this
Thus woll she saine, and all the toun atones,
The wretch is deed, the divel have his bones.

" Thou mayest alone here weepe, cry, and knele,
And love a woman that she wote it nought,
And she will quite it that thou shalt not feel :
Unknow unkist, and lost that is unsought.

What, many a man hath love full dere ybought
Twentie winter that his ladie ne wist,
That never yet his ladies mouth he kist.

“What, should he therfore fallen in dispair?
Or be recreaunt for his owne tene,
Or slaine himselfe, all be his ladie faire?
Nay, nay: but ever in one be fresh and green,
To serve and love his dere hertes queen,
And thinke it is a guerdone her to serve
A thousand part more than he can deserve.”

And of that worde tooke heede Troilus,
And thought anon, what folly he was in,
And how that sooth him sayed Pandarus,
That for to slaien himselfe, might he not win,
But both doen unmanhood and a sin
And of his death his ladie nought to wite,
For of his woe, God wote she knew full lite.

And with that thought, he gan full sore sike,
And sayd, “Alas, what is me best to doe?”
To whome Pandare sayed, “If thee it like,
The best is, that thou telle me thy woe,
And have my trouth, but if thou finde it so
I be thy boote, or it been full long,
To peeeces doe me drawe, and sithen hong.”

“Yea, so sayest thou,” (quod Troilus) “alas,
But God wote it is nought the rather so:
Full hard it were to helpen in this caas,
For well finde I, that Fortune is my fo:
Ne all the men that ride con or go,
May of her cruell whele the harme withstond,
For as her list, she playeth with free and bond.”

(Quod Pandarus) "Than blamest thou Fortune,
For thou art wroth, ye now at earst I see,
Wost thou not well that Fortune is commune
To everie manner wight, in some degree?
And yet thou hast this comfort, lo parde,
That as her joyes moten overgone,
So mote her sorrowes passen everichone.

"For if her whele stint any thing to tourne,
Than cesseth she Fortune anone to be:
Now sith her whele by no way may sojourn,
What wost thou of her mutabilitie?
Whether as thy self lust she woll don by thee,
Or that she be nought ferre fro thine helping,
Peraventure thou hast cause for to sing.

"And therefore wost thou what I thee beseech?
Let be thy woe, and touning to the ground:
For who so list have healing of his leech,
To him behooveth first unwrie his wound:
To Cerberus in Hell aie be I bound,
Wer it for my suster all thy sorrow,
By my will she should be thine to morrow.

"Looke up, I say, and tell me what she is
Anone, that I may gone about thy need:
Know ich her aught, for my love tell me this;
Than would I hope rather for to speed."
Tho gan the veine of Troilus to bleed,
For he was hit, and woxe all redde for shame,
"Aha," (quod Pandare) "here beginneth game."

And with that word, he gan him for to shake,
And sayd him thus, "Thou shalt her name tell:"
But tho gan sely Troilus for to quake,
As though men should han had him into Hell,

And sayed, “ Alas, of all my woe the well,
Than is my sweete foe called Crescide,”
And well nigh with that word for feare he deide.

And whan that Pandare herd her name neven,
Lord, he was glad, and saied, “ Friend so deere,
Now fare a right, for Joves name in Heaven,
Love hath beset thee well, be of good cheere,
For of good name, and wisdom, and manere
She hath inough, and eke of gentlenesse :
If she be faire, thou wost thy selfe, I gesse.

“ Ne never seie I a more bounteous
Of her estate, ne a gladder : ne of speech
A friendlyer, ne more gracious
For to doe well, ne lasse had ned to seech
What for to doen, and all this bet to ech
In honour to as farre as she may stretch :
A kinges herte seemeth by hers a wretch.

“ And forthy, look of good comfort thou be :
For certainly the first point is this
Of noble courage, and well ordaine the
A man to have peace with himselfe ywis :
So oughtest thou, for nought but good it is,
To loven well, and in a worthy place,
Thee ought not clepe it happe, but grace.

“ And also thinke, and therewith glad thee,
That sith the ladie vertuous is all,
So followeth it, that there is some pitee
Amonges all these other in generall,
And for they see that thou in speciall
Require nought, that is ayen her name,
For vertue stretcheth not himself to shame.

“ But well is me, that ever I was born,
That thou beset art in so good a place :
For by my trowth in love I durst have sworn,
Thee should never have tidde so fair a grace,
And wost thou why? for thou were wont to chace
At Love in scorne, and for dispite him call
Saint Idiote, lord of these fooles all.

“ How often hast thou made thy nice japes,
And saied, that Loves servaunts everichone
Of nicete ben verie goddes apes,
And some would monche hir meat all alone,
Ligging a bed, and make hem for to grone,
And some thou saidest had a blaunch fevere,
And praidest God, they should never kevere.

“ And some of hem took on hem for the cold,
More than inough, so saydest thou full oft :
And some han fained oft time and told,
How that they waken, whan they sleepe soft,
And thus they would have set hem self a loft,
And nathelesse were under at the last,
Thus saydest thou, and japedest full fast.

“ Yet saydest thou, that for the more part
These lovers would speake in generall,
And thoughten it was a siker art,
For failing, for to assayen over all :
Now may I jape of thee, if that I shall ;
But nathelesse, though that I should deie,
Thou art none of tho, I dare well seie.

“ Now bete thy brest, and say to god of love,
‘ Thy grace, lord, for now I me repent
If I misspake, for now my selfe, I love :’
Thus say with all thine herte, in good entent.”

(Quod Troilus) “ Ah lord, I me consent,
And pray to thee, my japes thou foryeve,
And I shall never more while I live.”

“ Thou sayst wel,” (quod Pandare) “ and now
I hope

That thou the goddes wrath hast all appeased :
And sith thou hast wepten many a drop,
And saied such thing wherwith thy god is plesed,
Now would never god, but thou were eased :
And think well she, of whom rest all thy wo,
Here after may thy comfort been also.

“ For thilke ground, that beareth the wedes wick,
Beareth eke these holsome herbes, as full oft
Next the foule nettle, rough and thick,
The rose wexeth, soote, smooth, and soft,
And next the valey is the hill a loft,
And next the derke night the glad morowe,
And also joy is next the fine of sorrow.

“ Now looke that attempre be thy bridell,
And for the best aie suffer to the tide,
Or else all our labour is on jdell,
He hasteth well, that wisely can abide :
Be diligent and true, and aie well hide,
Be lustie, free, persever in thy servise,
And all is well, if thou worke in this wise.

“ But he that departed is in everie place
Is no where hole, as writen clerkes wise :
What wonder is, if such one have no grace ?
Eke wost thou how it fareth of some service,
As plant a tree or herbe, in sondrie wise,
And on the morrow pull it up as blive,
No wonder is, though it may never thrive.

“ And sith the god of love hath thee bestowed
In place digne unto thy worthinesse,
Stonde fast, for to good port hast thou rowed,
And of thy selfe, for any heavinesse,
Hope alwaie well, for but if drerinesse
Or over-haste both our labour shend,
I hope of this to maken a good end.

“ And wost thou why, I am the lasse afered
Of this matter with my nece to trete?
For this have I heard say of wise lered,
Was never man or woman yet beyete,
That was unapt to suffer loves hete
Celestiall, or els love of kind:
Forthy, some grace I hope in her to find.

“ And for to speake of her in speciall,
Her beautie to bethinken, and her youth,
It sit her nought, to been celestiall
As yet, though that her list bothe and kouth:
And truely it sit her well right nouth
A worthy knight to loven and cherice,
And but she doe, I hold it for a vice.

“ Wherefore I am, and woll be aye ready
To paine me to doe you this service,
For both you to please, this hope I
Here after, for that ye been both wise,
And con counsaile keepe in such a wise,
That no man shall the wiser of it bee,
And so we maie ben gladded all three,

“ And by my trouth I have right now of thee
A good conceit, in my wit as I gesse:
And what it is, I woll now that thou sec,
I thinke that sith Love of his goodnesse

Hath thee converted out of wickednesse,
That thou shalt been the beste post, I leve,
Of all his lay, and most his foes greve.

“ Ensample why, see now these great clerkes,
That erren aldermost ayen a law,
And ben converted from hir wicked werkes
Throgh grace of God, that lest hem to withdrawe :
They arn the folke that han God most in awe,
And strengest faithed been, I understand,
And con an errour alderbest withstond.”

Whan Troilus had herd Pandare assented
To ben his helpe in loving of Creseide,
He wext of his wo, as who saith unturmented,
But hotter wext his love, and than he said
With sober chere, as though his herte plaid :
“ Now blisfull Venus helpe, ere that I sterve,
Of thee Pandare I mow some thank deserve.

“ But dere friend, how shall my wo be lesse,
Till this be done ? and good eke tell me this,
How wilt thou saine of me and my distresse,
Least she be wroth, this drede I most ywis,
Or woll not heren all, how it is,
All this drede I, and eke for the manere
Of thee her Eme, she n’ill no such thing here.”

(Quod Pandarus) “ Thou hast a full great care,
Lest the chorle may fall out of the Moone :
Why, lord ! I hate of thee the nice fare.
Why entremete of that thou hast to doone ?
For Godes love, I bid thee a boone :
So let me alone, and it shall be thy best.” [lest.
“ Why frend” (quod he) “ than done right as thee

“ But herke Pandare o word, for I n’olde,
That thou in me wendest so great follie,
That to my lady I desiren should,
That toucheth harme, or any villanie :
For dredelesse me were lever to die,
Than she of me ought els understood,
But that, that might sownen into good.”

Tho lough this Pandarus, and anon answerd :
“ And I thy borow, fie no wight doth but so,
I raught not though she stooode and herd,
How that thou saiest, but farwell, I woll go :
Adieu, be glad, God speed us bothe two,
Yeve me this labour and this businesse,
And of my speed be thine all the sweetnesse.”

Tho Troilus gan doune on knees to fall,
And Pandare in his armes hent him fast,
And saide, “ Now fie on the Greekes all :
Yet parde, God shall helpen at the last,
And dredelesse, if that my life may last,
And God toforne, lo some of hem shall smerte,
And yet me a thinketh that this avaunt masterte.

“ And now Pandare, I can no more say,
Thou wise, thou wost, thou maist, thou art all :
My life, my death, holec in thine hond I lay,”
“ Helpe me now,” (quod he.) “ Yes by my trouth
I shal.”

“ God yeeld thee friend, and this in speciall”
(Quod Troilus) “ that thou me recommaund
To her that may me to the death commaund.”

This Pandarus tho, desirous to serve
His full frende, he said in this manere :
“ Farewell, and thinke I woll thy thanke deserve.
Have here my trouth, and that thou shalt here,”

And went his way, thinking on this matere,
And how he best might beseechen her of grace,
And find a time thereto and a place.

For every wight that hath a house to found,
He renneth nat the werke for to begin,
With rakel hond, but he woll biden stound,
And send his hertes line out fro within,
Alderfirst his purpose for to win :
All thus Pandare in his herte thought,
And cast his werke full wisely ere he wrought.

But Troilus lay tho no lenger down,
But anone gat upon his stede baie,
And in the field he played the lioun,
Wo was the Greek, that with him met that daye :
And in the toune, his manner tho forth aye
So goodly was, and gat him so in grace,
That eche him loved that looked in his face.

For he became the friendliest wight,
The gentilest, and eke the most free,
The thriftiest, and one the best knight
That in his time was, or els might be :
Dead were his japes and his cruelte,
His high port and his manner straunge,
And each of hem gan for a vertue chaunge.

Now let us stint of Troilus a stound,
That fareth like a man that hurt is sore,
And is somedele of aking of his wound
Yllessed well, but healed no dele more :
And as an easie patient the lore
Abite of him that goeth about his cure,
And thus he driveth forth his aventure.

PROEME.

Out of these black wawes let us for to saile,
O winde, now the weather ginneth clere :
For in the sea the boate hath such travaile
Of my conning, that unneth I it stere :
This sea clepe I the tempestous matere
Of deepe dispaire, that Troilus was in :
But now of hope the kalendes begin.

O lady mine, that called art Cleo,
Thou be my spede fro this forth, and my Muse,
To rime well this booke till I have do,
Me needeth here none other art to use :
For why, to every lover I me excuse,
That of no sentement I this endite,
But out of Latine in my tongue it write.

Wherefore I n'il have neither thank ne blame
Of all this worke : but pray you mekely,
Disblameth me, if any word be lame,
For as mine authour said, so say I :
Eke though I speake of love unfeelingly,
No wonder is, for it nothing of new is,
A blind man cannot judgen well in hewis.

I know, that in forme of speech is change
Within a thousand yere, and wordes tho
That hadden prise, now wonder nice and strange
Thinketh hem, and yet they spake hem so,
And spedde as well in love, as men now do :
Eke for to winnen love, in sundry ages,
In sundry londes sundry ben usages.

And forthy, if it happe in any wise,
That here be any lover in this place,
That herkeneth, as the story woll devise,

How Troilus came to his ladies grace,
And thinketh, so nolde I not love purchase,
Or wondreth on his speech or his doing,
I not, but it is to me no wondring :

For every wight, which that to Rome went,
Halt nat o pathe, ne alway o manere :
Eke in some lond were all the gamen shent,
If that men farde in love, as men done here,
As thus, in open doing or in chere,
In visiting, in forme, or said our saws,
Forthy men sain, ech country hath his laws.

Eke scarsely ben there in this place three,
That have in love said like, and done in all :
For to this purpose this may liken thee,
And thee right nought, yet all is done or shall :
Eke some men grave in tre, som in stone wall,
As it betide, but sith I have begonne,
Mine authour shall I follow, as I konne.

INCIPIT LIBER SECUNDUS.

IN May, that mother is of moneths glade,
That the fresh floures, both blew, white, and rede,
Ben quick ayen, that winter dead made,
And full of baume is fleting every mede,
Whan Phebus doth his brighte beames spred,
Right in the white Bole, it so betidde,
As I shall sing, on Mayes day the thriddle,
That Pandarus, for all his wise speach,
Felt eke his part of Loves shottes kene,
That coud he never so well of loving preach,
It made his hew a day full ofte grene :
So shope it, that him fill that day a tene
In love, for which in wo to bed he went,
And made ere it were day full many a went.

The swallow Progne, with a sorrowfull lay,
Whan morrow come, gan make her waimenting
Why she forshapen was : and ever lay
Pandare a bed, halfe in a slombring,
Till she so nigh him made her waimenting,
How Tereus gan forth her suster take,
That with the noise of her he gan awake,

And to call, and dresse him up to rise,
Remembring him his arrand was to done
From Troilus, and eke his great emprise,
And cast, and knew in good plite was the Moone
To done voiage, and tooke his way full soone
Unto his neces paleis there beside :
Now Janus god of entre, thou him guide.

When he was come unto his neces place,
“ Where is my lady,” to her folke (quod he)
And they him told, and he forth in gan pace,
And found two other ladies sit and shee,
Within a paved parlour, and they three
Herden a maiden hem reden the geste
Of the seige of Thebes, while hem leste :

(Quod Pandarus) “ Madame, God you see,
With your booke, and all the companie :”
“ Eigh, uncle mine, welcome ywis,” (quod shee)
And up she rose, and by the hond in hie
She tooke him fast, and said, “ This night thrie,
To good mote it turne, of you I met :”
And with that word, she downe on bench him set.

“ Yea, nece, ye shull faren well the bet,
If God woll, all this yeare,” (quod Pandarus)
“ But I am sorry that I have you let
To hearken of your booke, ye praisen thus :

For Godes love what saith it, tell it us,
Is it of love, or some good ye me lere?"
"Uncle," (quod she) "your maistresse is nat here."

With that they gonnen laugh, and tho she seide,
"This romaunce is of Thebes, that we rede,
And we have heard how that king Laius deide
Through Edippus his sonne, and al the dede:
And here we stinten, at these letters rede,
How the bishop, as the booke can tell,
Amphiorax, fell through the ground to Hell."

(Quod Pandarus) "All this know I my selve,
And all th'assiege of Thebes, and the care,
For hereof ben there maked bookes twelve:
But let be this, and tell me how ye fare,
Do way your barbe, and shew your face bare,
Do way your book, rise up and let us daunce,
And let us done to May some observaunce."

"Eigh, God forbid:" (quod she) "be ye mad?
Is that a widdowes life, so God you save?
By God ye maken me right sore adrad,
Ye ben so wild, it seemeth as ye rave,
It sat me well bet aye in a cave
To bide, and rede on holy saintes lives:
Let maidens gon to daunce, and yonge wives."

"As ever thrive I," (quod this Pandarus)
"Yet could I tell o thing, to done you play:"
"Now uncle dere," (quod she) "tell it us
For Godes love, is than th'assiege away?
I am of Greekes ferde, so that I dey:"
"Nay, nay," (quod he) "as ever mote I thrive,
It is a thing well bet than suche five."

“Ye holy God,” (quod she) “what thing is that,
What, bet than suche five? eigh nay ywis,
For all this world ne can I reden what
It shoulde ben; some jape I trow it is,
And but your selven tell us what it is,
My wit is for to arede it all to leane:
As helpe me God, I n’ot what that ye meane.”

“And I your borow, ne never shall,” (quod he)
“This thing be told to you, as mote I thrive:”
“And why, uncle mine, why so?” (quod she)
“By God,” (quod he) “that woll I tell as blive,
For prouder woman is there none on live,
And ye it wist, in all the toun of Troy:
I jape nat, so ever have I joy.”

Tho gan she wondren more than before,
A thousand fold, and downe her eyen cast:
For never sith the time that she was bore,
To knowen thing desired she so fast,
And with a sike, she said him at the last,
“Now uncle mine, I n’ill you not displease,
Nor asken more, that may do you disease.”

So after this, with many wordes glade,
And friendly tales, and with merry chere,
Of this and that they speake, and gonnen wade
In many an unkouth glad and deepe matere,
As friendes done, whan they bethe yfere,
Till she gan asken him how Hector ferde,
That was the tounes wall, and Greekes yerde.

“Full wel I thanke it God,” said Pandarus,
“Save in his arme he hath a little wound,
And eke his fresh brother Troilus,
The wise worthy Hector the secound,

In whom that every vertue list habound,
And first all trouthe, and all gentlenesse,
Wisdom, honour, freedom, and worthinesse."

"In good faith, eme," (quod she) "that liketh me,
They faren well, God save hem both two :
For trewliche, I hold it great deintie,
A kinges sonne in armes well to do,
And be of good conditions thereto :
For great power, and morall vertue here
Is selde isene in one persone ifere."

"In good faith, that is sooth" (quod Pandarus)
"But by my trouth the king hath sonnes twey,
That is to meane, Hector and Troilus,
That certainly though that I should dey,
They ben as void of vices, dare I sey,
As any men that liven under Sunne,
Hir might is wide yknow, and what they conne.

"Of Hector needeth it no more for to tell,
In all this world there n'is a better knight
Than he, that is of worthinesse the well,
And he well more vertue hath than might,
This knoweth many a wise and worthy knight :
And the same prise of Troilus I sey,
God helpe me so, I know not suche twey."

"By God," (quod she) "of Hector that is sooth,
And of Troilus the same thing trow I :
For dredelesse, men telleth that he dooth
In armes day by day so worthely,
And beareth him here at home so gently
To every wight, that all prise hath he
Of hem that me were levest praised be."

“Ye say right sooth ywis,” (quod Pandarus)
“For yesterday, who so had with him been,
Mighten have wondred upon Troilus,
For never yet so thicke a swarme of been
Ne flew, as Greekes from him gan fleen,
And through the field in every wightes eare,
There was no crie, but Troilus is there.

“Now here, now there, he hunted hem so fast,
There nas but Greekes blood, and Troilus,
Now him he hurt, and him all doun he cast,
Aye where he went it was arraied thus :
He was hir death, and shield and life for us,
That as the day ther durst him none withstond,
While that he held his bloody swerd in hond.

“Thereto he is the friendliest man
Of great estate, that ever I saw my live :
And where him list, best fellowship can
To such as him thinketh able for to thrive.”
And with that word, tho Pandarus as blive
He tooke his leave, and said, “I woll gon hen :”
“Nay, blame have I, uncle,” (quod she then.)

“What eileth you to be weary thus soone,
And nameliche of women, woll ye so ?
Nay sitteth doune, by God I have to done
With you, to speake of wisdomer er ye go :”
And every wight that was about hem tho,
That heard that, gan ferre away to stond,
While they two had all that hem list in hond.

Whan that her tale all brought was to an end
Of her estate, and of her governaunce,
(Quod Pandarus) “Now time is that I wend,
But yet I say, ariseth, let us daunce,

And cast your widdows habit to mischaunce :
What list you thus your selfe to disfigure,
Sith you is tidde so glad an aventure ?”

“ But well bethought: for love of God,” (quod she)

“ Shall I not weten what ye meane of this ?”

No, this thing asketh leaser tho,” (quod he)

“ And eke me would full much greve ywis.

If I it told, and ye it tooke amis :

Yet were it bette my tongue to hold still,
Than say a sooth, that were ayenst your will.

“ For nece mine, by the goddesse Minerve,
And Jupiter, that maketh the thunderring,
And the blisfull Venus, that I serve,
Ye ben the woman in this world living
Withouten paramours, to my weting,
That I best love, and lothest am to greve,
And that ye weten well your selfe, I leve.”

“ Ywis mine uncle,” (quod she) “ graunt mercy,
Your friendship have I founden ever yet,
I am to no man beholden truely
So much as you, and have so little quit :
And with the grace of God, emforth my wit
As in my guilt, I shall you never offend,
And if I have ere this, I woll amend.

“ But for the love of God I you beseech
As ye be he that I love most and trist,
Let be to me your fremed manner speech,
And say to me your nece what you list :”
And with that word her uncle anon her kist,
And said, “ Gladly my leve nece so dere,
Take it for good that I shall say you here.”

With that she gan her eien doune to cast,
And Pandarus to coughe gan a lite,
And said: " Nece, alway lo, to the last,
How so it be, that some men hem delite
With subtile art hir tales for tendite,
Yet for all that in hir entention,
Hir tale is all for some conclusion.

" And sith the end is every tales strength,
And this matter is so behovedly,
What should I paint it or drawn it on length
To you, that ben my friend so faithfully?"
And with that word he gan right inwardly
Beholden her, and looken in her face,
And said, "On such a mirrour much good grace."

Than thought he thus, " If I my tale endite
Ought hard, or make a processe any while,
She shall no savour have therein but lite,
And trow I would her in my will beguile:
For tender wittes wenen all be wile,
Whereas they con nat plainlich understond:
Forthy her wit to serven woll I fond."

And looked on her in a busie wise,
And she was ware that he beheld her so:
" Ah lord," (quod she) " so fast ye me avise,
Saw ye me never ere now, what say ye no?"
" Yes, yes," (quod he) " and bet woll ere I go:
But by my trouth I thought nowe, if ye
Be fortunate: for now men shall it see.

" For every wight some goodly aventure,
Sometime is shape, if he it can receiven:
But if he n'ill take of it no cure
Whan that it cometh, but wilfully it weiven:

Lo, neither ease nor fortune him deceiven,
But right his own slouth and wretchednesse :
And such a wight is for to blame, I gesse.

“ Good aventure, O belle nece, have ye
Full lightly founden, and ye come it take :
And for the love of God, and eke of me,
Catch it anone, least aventure slake :
What should I lenger processe of it make,
Yeve me your hond, for in this world is non,
If that you list, a wight so well begon.

“ And sith I speake of good ententioun,
As I to you have told well here beforen,
And love as well your honour and renoun,
As any creature in all the world yborne :
By all the othes that I have you sworne,
And ye be wroth therefore or wene I lie,
Ne shall I never seeue you eft with eie.

“ Beth nat agast, ne quaketh nat, whereto ?
Ne chaunge nat for fere so your hew,
For hardely the worst of this is do :
And though my tale as now be to you new,
Yet trust alway : ye shall me finde true,
And were it thing that me thought unfitting,
To you ne would I no such tales bring.”

“ Now, my good eme, for Godes love I prey,”
(Quod she) “ come off tell me what it is :
For both I am agast what ye woll say,
And eke me longeth it to wit ywis :
For whether it be well, or be amis,
Say on, let me not in this feare dwell.”
“ So woll I done, now hearkeneth I shall tell :

“ Now, nece mine, the kinges own dere sonne,
The good, wise, worthy, fresh, and free,
Which alway for to done well is his wonne,
The noble Troilus so loveth thee,
That but ye helpe, it woll his bane be,
Lo here is all, what should I more sey ?
Doth what you list, to make him live or dey.

“ But if ye let him die, I woll sterven,
Have here my trouthe, nece, I nill not lien,
All should I with this knife my throte kerven : ”
With that the teares burst out of his eien,
And said, “ If that ye done us both dien
Thus guiltlesse, than have ye fished faire :
What mend ye, though that we both apaire ?

“ Alas, he which that is my lord so dere,
That trewe man, that noble gentle knight,
That nought desireth but your friendly chere,
I see him dien, there he goeth upright :
And hasteth him with all his fulle might
For to ben slaine, if his fortune assent,
Alas that God you such a beautie sent.

“ If it be so that ye so cruell be,
That of his death you listeth nought to retch,
That is so trew and worthy as we see,
No more than of a japer or a wretch,
If ye be such, your beaute may nat stretch,
To make amendes of so cruell a dede :
Avisement is good before the nede.

“ Wo worth the faire gemme vertulesse,
Wo worth that hearbe also that doth no bote,
Wo worth the beauty that is routhlesse,
Wo worth that wight that trede ech under fote :

And ye that ben of beautie croppe and rote,
If therewithall in you ne be no routh,
Than is it harme ye liven by my trowth.

“ And also thinke well, that this is no gaud,
For me were lever, thou, I, and he
Were honged, than I should ben his baud,
As high as men might on us all ysee :
I am thine eme, the shame were to mee,
As well as thee, if that I should assent
Through mine abet, that he thine honour shent.

“ Now understand, for I you nought requere
To bind you to him, through no behest,
Save onely that ye make him better cheere
Than ye han don or this, and more feste,
So that his life be saved at the leste :
This al and some, and plainly our entente,
God helpe me so, I never other mente.

“ Lo, this request is nought but skill ywis,
Ne doubt of reason parde is there none :
I set the worst, that ye dreden this,
Men would wonder to seen him come and gone :
There ayenst answer I thus anone,
That every wight, but he be foole of kind,
Woll deeme it love of frendship in his mind.

“ What, who woll demen tho he see a man
To temple gone, that he the images eateth ?
Thinke eke, how well and wisely that he can
Govern himselfe, that he nothing foryetteth,
That wher he cometh, he pris and thonk him
getteth ;

And eke thereto he shal come here so seld,
What force were it, thogh all the toun beheld.

“Such love of friends reigneth thorow al this
And wrie you in that mantle evermo, [toun :
And God so wis be my salvatioun
As I have sayd, your best is to do so :
But, good nece, alway to stint his wo,
So let your daunger sugred ben alite,
That of his death ye be not all to wite.”

Creseide, which that herd him in this wise,
Thought, “I shall felen what he meaneth ywis :
“Now eme,” (quod she) “what would ye devise?
What is your rede, I should done of this ?”
“That is well said,” (quod he) “certaine best is,
That ye him love ayen for his loving,
As love for love is skilfull guerdoning.

“Thinke eke how elde wasteth every hour
In each of you a part of beaute,
And therefore, ere that age the devour,
Go love, for old there woll no wight of thee :
Let this proverbe, a lore unto you bee,
‘Too late yware’ (quod beaute) ‘whan it past,
And elde daunteth daunger, at the last.’

“The kinges foole is wont to crie aloud,
Whan that he thinketh a woman bereth her hie,
‘So longe mote ye liven, and all proud,
Till crowes feet growen under your cie,
And send you than a mirrour in to prie,
In which that ye may see your face a morow,’
Nece, I bid him wish you no more sorow.”

With this he stint, and caste down the head,
And she began to brest and wepe anone,
And said, “Alas for wo, why nere I dead,
For of this world the faith is all agone :

Alas, what shoulde[n] straunge unto me done,
Whan he that for my best frende I wend,
Rate me to love, and should it me defend.

“ Alas, I would have trusted doubteles,
That if that I, through my disaventure,
Had loved either him or Achilles,
Hector, any other creature,
Ye nolde have had mercy ne measure
On me, but alway had me in reprove :
This false world alas, who may it leve ?

“ What ? is this all the joy and all the feast ?
Is this your rede ? is this my blisfull caas ?
Is this the very mede of your behest ?
Is all this painted processe said (alas)
Right for this fine ? O lady mine Pallas,
Thou in this dredefull case for me purvey,
For so astonied am I, that I dey.”

With that she gan full sorrowfully to sike,
“ Ne may it be no bet,” (quod Pandarus)
“ By God I shall no more come here this weke,
And God toforne, that am mistrusted thus :
I see well now ye setten light of us,
Or of our death, alas, I wofull wretch,
Might he yet live, of me were nought to retch.

“ O cruell god, O dispitous Marte,
O furies three of Hell, on you I crie,
So let me never out of this house depart,
If that I meant harne or villanie :
But sith I see my lord mote needes die,
And I with him, here I me shrive and sey,
That wickedly ye done us both to dey.

“ But sith it liketh you, that I be dead,
By Neptunus, that god is of the see,
Fro this forth shall I never eaten bread,
Till that I mine owne herte blood may see :
For certaine I woll die as soone as hee.”
And up he stert, and on his way he raught,
Till she againe him by the lappe caught.

Creseide, which that well nigh starf for feare,
So as she was the fearfullest wight
That might be, and heard eke with her eare,
And saw the sorrowfull earnest of the knight,
And in his praier saw eke none unright,
And for the harme eke that might fall more,
She gan to rew and dread her wonder sore.

And thought thus, “ Unhapes do fallen thicke
Alday for love, and in such manner caas,
As men ben cruell in hemselfe and wicke :
And if this man slee here himselfe, alas,
In my presence, it n’ill be no solas,
What men would of it deme I can nat say,
It needeth me full slightly for to play.”

And with a sorowfull sigh, she said thrie,
“ Ah, Lord, what me is tidde a sorry chaunce,
For mine estate lieth in jeopardie,
And eke mine emes life lieth in ballaunce :
But nathelesse, with Godes governaunce
I shall so done, mine honour shall I keepe,
And eke his life, and stinte for to weepe.

“ Of harmes two, the lesse is for to chese,
Yet had I lever maken him good chere
In honour, than my emes life to lese.
Ye sain, ye nothing eles me requere.”

“No wis,” (quod he) “mine owne nece so dere.”

“Now well” (quod she) “and I woll done my
paine,

I shall mine herte ayen my lust constraine.

“But that I nill nat holden him in hond,

Ne love a man, that can I naught ne may,

Ayent my will, but eles woll I fonde,

Mine honour save, plesen him fro day to day,

Thereto nolde I not ones have said nay,

But that I dredde, as in my fantasie :

But cesse cause, aie cesseth maladie.

“But here I make a protestacion,

That in this processe if ye deper go,

That certainly, for no salvation

Of you, though that ye sterven bothe two,

Though all the world on o day be my fo,

Ne shall I never on him have other routhe :”

“I graunt wel,” (quod Pandare) by my trouthe.

“But maie I trust well to you,” (quod he)

“That of this thing that ye han hight me here

Ye woll it holde truely unto me?”

“Yea doubtlesse,” (quod she) “mine uncle dere.”

“Ne that I shall have cause in this matere”

(Quod he) “to plain, or ofter you to preach?”

“Why no parde, what nedeth more speach.”

Tho fell they in other tales glade

Till at the last, “O good Eme,” (quod she tho)

“For love of God which that us bothe made,

Tell me how first ye wisten of his wo :

Wot none of it but ye?” he said “No :”

“Can he well speake of love,” (quod she) “I preie ?

Tell me, for I the bet shall me purveie.”

Tho Pandarus a litel gan to smile,
And saied : “ By my trouth I shall now tell,
This other daie, nat gon full long while,
Within the paleis gardin by a well
Gan he and I, well halfe a day to dwell,
Right for to spoken of an ordinaunce,
How we the Grekes mighten disavaunce.

“ Sone after that we gone for to lepe,
And casten with our dartes to and fro :
Till at the last, he saied, he would slepe,
And on the grasse adoune he laied him tho,
And I after gan to romen to and fro,
Till that I heard, as I walked alone,
How he began full wofully to grone.

“ Tho gan I stalke him softly behind,
And sikerly the sothe for to saine,
As I can clepe ayen now to my mind,
Right thus to love he gan him for to plain,
He saied : ‘ Lorde, have routh upon my pain,
All have I been rebell in mine entent,
Now (mea culpa) lord I me repent.

“ ‘ O God, that at thy disposicion
Ledest the fine, by just purveiaunce
Of every wight, my lowe confession
Accept in gree, and sende me soche penaunce
As liketh thee, but from me disesperaunce,
That may my ghost departe alway fro the,
Thou be my shilde, for thy benigneite.

“ ‘ Forcertes, lorde, so sore hath she me wounded
That stode in blacke, with loking of hir iyen,
That to mine hertes botome it is yfounded
Through which I wot, that I must nedes dien ;

This is the worst, I dare me nought bewrien,
And well the hoter been the gledes rede
That men hem wren with ashen pale and dede.'

"With that he smote his hedde adoune anone
And gan to muttre, I n'at what truely,
And I with that gan still awaie to gone
And lete thereof, as nothing wist had I,
And come again anon and stode him by
And saied, 'Awake, ye slepen all to long :
It semeth nought that love doth you wrong.

" 'That slepen so that no man maie you wake ;
Who seie ever er this so dull a man ?'

'Ye, frende,' (quod he) 'doe ye your heddes ake
For love, and let me liven as I can.'

But lorde though he for wo was pale and wan ;
Yet made he tho as fresh a countenaunce,
As though he should have led the newe daunce

"This passed forth, till now this other daie
It fell that I come roming all alone
Into his chambre, and founde how that he laie
Upon his bedde : but man so sore grone
Ne heard I never, and what was his mone
Ne wist I nought, for as I was comming
All sodainly he left his complaining.

"Of whiche I toke somewhat suspicion,
And nere I come, and found him wepe sore ;
And God so wise be my salvaicion,
As never of thing had I no routh more :
For neither with engine, ne with no lore,
Unnethes might I fro the death him kepe,
That yet fele I mine herte for him wepe.

“ And God wot never sith that I was borne
Was I so busie no man for to preache,
Ne never was to wight so depe sworne,
Er he me told, who might been his leache ;
But not to you rehearsen all his speach,
Or all his wofull wordes for to sowne,
Ne bid me nought, but ye woll se me swone.

“ But for to save his life, and eles nought,
And to none harne of you, thus am I driven,
And for the love of God that us hath wrought
Soche chere him doth, that he and I maie liven ;
Now have I plat to you mine herte shriven,
And sith ye wote that mine entent is cleane
Take hede thereof, for none evill I meane.

“ And right good thrift, I pray to God have ye,
That han soche one ycaught withouten net,
And be ye wise, as ye be faire to se,
Well in the ring, than is the rubie set ;
There were never two so well ymet
Whan ye been his all hole, as he is your :
There mightie God yet graunt us to se the hour.”

“ Naie thereof spake I nat : A ha !” (quod she)

“ As helpe me God, ye shenden every dele :”

“ A mercie, dere nece, anon” (quod he)

“ What so I spake, I ment nought but wele,
By Mars the god, that helmed is of stele :
Now beth not wroth, my blood, my nece dere.”

“ Now well,” (quod she) “ foryeven be it here.”

With this he toke his leave, and home he went,
Ye, Lord, how he was glad, and well bigon :
Creseide arose, no lenger she ne shent,
But streight into her closet went anon,

And set her doune, as still as any stone,
And every word gan up and doune to wind,
That he had said as it came her to mind.

And woxe somdele astonied in her thought,
Right for the newe case, but whan that she
Was full avised, tho found she right nought,
Of perill, why that she ought aferde be :
For man may love of possibilite
A woman so, his herte may to brest,
And she nat love ayen, but if her lest.

But as she sat alone, and thought thus,
Th'ascrie arose at skarmoch all without,
And men cried in the strete, " Se Troilus
Hath right now put to flight the Grekes rout."
With that gonne all her meine for to shout :
" A, go we se, cast up the gates wide,
For through this strete he mote to paleis ride."

For other waie is fro the gates none,
Of Dardanus, there open is the cheine :
With that come he, and all his folke anone
An easie pace riding, in routes tweine,
Right as his happy day was, soth to seine :
For which men saith, may not distourbed be
That shall betide of necessite.

This Troilus sat on his baie stede
All armed save his head full richely,
And wounded was his horse, and gan to blede,
On which he rode a pace full softly :
But such a knightly sight truely
As was on him, was nat withouten faile
To loke on Mars, that god is of battaile.

So like a man of armes, and a knight
He was to seen, fulfilled of high prowesse,
For both he had a body, and might
To doen that thing, as well as hardinesse,
And eke to seen him in his geare dresse
So freshe, so yong, so weldy semed he,
It was an heaven upon him for to se.

His helme to hewen was in twenty places,
That by a tissue hong, his backe behind,
His shelde to dashed with swords and with maces,
In which men might many an arowe find,
That thirled had both horn, nerfe, and rind :
Andaie the people cried, " Here cometh our joie,
And next his brother, holder up of Troie."

For which he wext a little redde for shame
Whan he so heard the people upon him crien,
That to behold it was a noble game,
How soberliche he cast adoune his eyen :
Crescide anon gan all his chere espien,
And let it so soft in hir herte sinke,
That to her self she said, " Who yave me drinke?"

For all her own thought, she woxe all redde,
Remembring her right thus, " Lo this is he,
Which that mine uncle swereth he mote dedde,
But I on him have mercie and pite :"
And with that thought, for pure ashamed she,
Gan in her hedde to pull, and that as fast,
While he and all the people forth by past.

And gan to cast, and rollen up and down
Within her thought his excellent prowesse,
And his estate, and also his renoun,
His witte, his shape, and eke his gentilnesse,

But most her favour was, for his distresse
Was all for her, and thought it were a routh,
To slaen soche one, if that he ment trouth.

Now might some envious jangle thus,
“This was a sodain love, how might it be,
That she so lightly loved Troilus?
Right for the first sight: ye, parde?”
Now whoso saied so, mote he never the:
For every thing a ginning hath it nede
Er all be wrought, withouten any drede.

For I saie nat that she so sodainly
Yafe him her love, but that she gan encline
To liken him tho, and I have told you why:
And after that, his manhode, and his pine,
Made that love within her gan to mine:
For which by processe, and by good service
He wanne her love, and in no sodain wise.

And all so blisfull Venus wele araied
Satte in her seventh house of Heven tho,
Disposed wele, and with aspectes payed,
To helpe sely Troilus of his wo:
And sothe to sayne, she n'as nat all a foe
To Troilus, in his natyvyte,
God wote that wele the sooner spede he.

Now let us stente of Troilus a throw,
That rideth forth, and let us tourne fast
Unto Creseide, that heng her hedde full low,
There as she satte alone, and gan to cast
Whercon she would appoint her at the last,
If it so were her eme ne would cesse,
For Troilus upon her for to presse.

And lorde so she gan in her thought argue
In this matter, of which I have you told,
And what to doen best were, and what eschue,
That plited she full oft in many fold :
Now was hir herte warme, now was it cold.
And what she thought, somewhat shall I write,
As mine authour listeth for t'endite.

She thought first, that Troilus person
She knew by sight and eke his gentelnesse :
And thus she said, " All were it nought to doen
To grant him love, yet for his worthinesse,
It were honor with plaie, and with gladnesse,
In honeste with soch a lorde to deale,
For mine estate, and also for his heale.

" Eke well wote I, my kinges sonne is he,
And sith he hath to see me soch delite,
If I would utterliche his sight flie,
Paraventure he might have me in dispite,
Through which I might stond in wors plite :
Now were I wise, me hate to purchase
Without nede, there I may stande in grace ?

" In every thing, I wot there lieth measure :
For though a man forbid dronkennesse,
He nought forbiddeth that every creature
Be drinkelesse for alway, as I gesse :
Eke, sithe I wot for me is his distresse,
I ne ought not for that thing him dispise,
Sith it is so, he meaneth in good wise.

" And eke I know, of long time ago
His thewes good, and that he nis not nice,
No vauntour saine men, certain he is none,
To wise is he to doen so great a vice :

Ne als I nill him never so cherice,
That he shall make avaunt by just cause :
He shall me never binde in soche a clause.

“ Now set a case, the hardest is ywis,
Men might demen that he loveth me :
What dishonour were it unto me this ?
Maie iche hem let of that ? why naie parde :
I know also, and alway heare and se,
Men loven women all this toun about,
Be they the wers ? Why naie withouten dout ?

“ I thinke eke how, he worthie is to have
Of all this noble toun the thriftiest,
That woman is, if she her honour save :
For out and out he is the worthiest,
Save only Hector, which that is the best,
And yet his life lieth all now in my cure,
But soche is love, and eke mine aventure.

“ Ne me to love, a wonder is it nought :
For well wote I my self, so God me spede,
All woll I that no man wist of this thought,
I am one the fairest out of drede
And goodliest, who so that taketh hede :
And so men saine in all the toun of Troie,
What wonder is though he of me have joie ?

“ I am mine owne woman well at ease,
I thanke it God, as after mine estate,
Right yong, and stond untied in lustie lease,
Withouten jelousie, and such debate :
Shall no husbonde saine to me checke mate,
For either they be full of jelousie,
Or maisterfull, or loven novelrie.

“ What shall I doen ? to what fine live I thus ?
Shall I not love, in case if that me lest ?
What pardieux I am not religious :
And though that I mine herte set at fest
Upon this knight, that is the worthiest,
And kepe alway mine honor, and my name,
By all right it may doe me no shame.”

But right as whan the Sunne shineth bright
In March, that chaungeth oft time his face,
And that a cloud is put with winde to flight,
Which oversprat the Sunne, as for a space,
A cloudy thought gan through her soul pace,
That overspradde her bright thoughtes all,
So that for feare almost she gan to fall.

That thought was this : “ Alas sith I am free,
Should I now love, and put in jeopardie
My sikernesse, and thrallen libertie ?
Alas, how durst I thinke that folie ?
May I not well in other folke aspie
Hir dredfull joie, hir constreint, and hir pain :
Ther loveth none, that she ne hath why to plain.

“ For love is yet the moste stormie life,
Right of himself, that ever was begonne :
For ever some mistrust, or nice strife,
There is in love, some cloud over the Sunne :
Thereto we wretched women nothing conne
Whan us is wo, but wepe and sit and thinke,
Our wretch is this, our owne wo to drinke.

Also wicked tongues been ay so prest
To speake us harne : eke men ben so untrue,
That right anon as cessed is hir lest,
So cesseth love, and forth to love a newe :

But harm ydoe is doen, who so it rue :
For though these men for love hem first to rende,
Full sharp beginning breaketh oft at ende.

“How oft time may men both rede and seen,
The treason, that to woman hath be doe ?
To what fine is soche love, I can not seen,
Or where becometh it, whan it is go,
There is no wight that wote, I trowe so,
Wher it becometh, lo, no wight on it sporneth ;
That erst was nothing, into naught turneth.

“How busie (if I love) eke must I be
To pleasen hem, that jangle of love, and demen,
And coyen hem, that thei saie no harm of me :
For though there be no cause, yet hem semen
Al be for harme, that folke hir frendes quemen :
And who maie stoppen every wicked tong ?
Or sounce of belles, while that they been rong ?”

And after that her thought gan for to clere
And saied, “He which that nothing undertaketh
Nothing acheveth, be him loth or dere ;”
And with another thought her herte quaketh
Than slepeth hope, and after drede awaketh,
Now hote, now cold, but thus bitwixen twey
She rist her up, and went hir for to pley.

Adoune the staire anon right tho she went
Into her gardine, with her neeces three,
And up and down, they maden many a went
Flexippe and she, Tarbe, and Antigone,
To plaien, that to joie was to see,
And other of her women a great rout
Her followeth in the gardaine all about.

This yerde was large, and railed al the alies
And shadowed wel, with blosomy bowes grene,
And benched newe, and sonded all the waies
In which she walketh arme in arme betwene,
Till at the last Antigone the shene
Gan on a Troian song to singen clere,
That it an Heven was her voice to here.

She saied, “ O Love, to whom I have, and shall
Been humble subject, true in mine entent
As I best can, to you, lorde, yeve iche all
For evermore mine hertes lust to rent :
For never yet thy grace to no wight sent
So blisfull cause as me, my life to lede
In all joie and suretie, out of drede.

“ The blisfull god, hath me so well beset
In love ywis, that all that beareth life
Imaginen ne could how to be bet,
For, lorde, withouten jelousie or strife
I love one, which that moste is ententife
To serven well, unwerily or unfained,
That ever was, and lest with harme distained,

“ As he that is the well of worthinesse,
Of trouth ground, mirrour of goodlihedde,
Of wit Apollo, stone of sikernesse,
Of vertue roote, of luste finder and hedde,
Through whiche is all sorrowe fro me dedde :
Ywis I love him best, so doeth he me,
Now good thrift have he, where so ever he be.

“ Whom should I thanken but you, god of love,
Of all this blisse, in which to bathe I ginne.
And thanked be ye, lorde, for that I love,
This is the right life that I am inne,

To flemen all maner vice and sinne :
This doeth me so to vertue for to entende
That daie by daie I in my will amende.

“ And who that saieth that for to love is vice,
Or thraldome, though he fele it in distresse,
He either is envious, or right nice,
Or is unmightie for his shreudnesse,
To loven, for soch maner folke I gesse
Diffamen Love, as nothing of him know
They spoken, but they bent never his bowe.

“ What is the Sunne worse of his kind right,
Though that a man, for feblenesse of his eye
Maie not endure on it to se for bright ?
Or love the worst, that wretches on it erien ?
No wele is worth, that may no sorowe drien :
And forthy, who that hath an hedde of verre
Fro cast of stones ware him in the werre.

“ But I with all mine herte and all my might,
As I have saied, woll love unto my last
My owne dere herte and all mine owne knight,
In whiche mine herte growen is so fast
And his in me, that it shall ever last :
All dredde I first love him to begin,
Now wote I well there is no perill in.”

And of her song right with that word she stent,
And therewithall, “ Now nece” (quod Creseide)
“ Who made this song now with so good entent ?”
Antigone answerde anon and saide,
“ Madame ywis the goodliest maide
Of great estate in all the toune of Troie
And led her life in most honour and joie.”

“ Forsothe so semeth it by her song,”
Quod tho Creseide, and gan therewith to sike,
And saied : “ Lorde, is there soche blisse emong
These lovers, as they can faire endite :”
“ Ye, wisse,” quod fresh Antigone the white,
“ For all the folke that have or been on live
Ne con well the blisse of love discrive.

“ But wene ye that every wretche wote
The parfite blisse of love ? why naic ywis :
They wenen all be love, if one be hote :
Do waie do waie, they wote nothing of this.
Men mote asken of saintes, if it is
Ought faire in Heven, and why ? for they can
And aske fendes, if it be foule in Hell.” [tell,

Creseide unto the purpose naught answerde,
But saied, “ Ywis it woll be night as fast,”
But every worde, which that she of her herde,
She gan to printen in her herte fast,
And aie gan love her lasse for to agast
Than it did erst, and sinken in her herte,
That she waxe somewhat able to convarte.

The daies honour, and the Heavens eye,
The nightes foe, all this clepe I thec Sonne,
Gan westren fast, and downward for to wrie,
As he that had his daies course yronne,
And white thinges woxen al dimme and donne
For lacke of light, and sterres for to apere,
That she and all her folke in went yfere.

So whan it liked her to gon to rest,
And voided weren they that voiden ought,
She saied, that to slepen well her leste :
Her women sone till her bedde her brought :

Whan al was hust, than lay she still and thought
Of all this thing the maner and the wise,
Rehearse it needeth not, for ye been wise.

A nightingale upon a cedre grene
Under the chamber wall, there as she laie,
Full loude song ayen the Mone shene
Paraventure, in his birdes wise, a laie
Of love, that made her herte freshe and gaie,
That herkened she so long in good entent,
Till at the last the dedde sleepe her hent.

And as she slept, anon right tho her met,
How that an egle fethered white as bone,
Under her brest his longe clawes yset,
And out her herte he rent, and that anon,
And did his herte into her brest to gon,
Of which she nought agrose, ne nothing smart,
And forth he flieth, with herte left for herte.

Now let her slepe, and we our tales holde
Of Troilus, that is to paleis ridden,
Fro the scarmishe of which I you tolde,
And in his chamber sate, and hath abidden,
Till two or three of his messengers yeden
For Pandarus, and soughten him full fast,
Till they him found, and brought him at the last.

This Pandarus came leaping in at ones,
And saied thus, " Who hath been well ybete
To day with swerdes, and slong stones,
But Troilus, that hath caught him an hete?"
And gan to jape, and saied, " Lord ye swete,
But rise and let us soupe, and go to reste,"
And he answerde him, " Do we as thee leste."

With all the haste goodly as they might,
They sped hem fro the souper, and to bedde,
And every wight out at the doore him dight,
And whider him list, upon his waic him sped :
But Troilus thought that his herte bledde
For wo, till that he heard some tiding,
And saied, “ Frende, shall I now wepe or sing?”

(Quod Pandarus) “ Be still and let me slepe,
And doe on thy hoode, thine nedes spedde be,
And chose if thou wolt sing, daunce, or lepe,
At short wordes thou shalt trowe all by me,
Sir, my nece woll doen well by thee,
And love thee best, by God and by trothe,
But lacke of pursute marre it in thy slothe.

“ For thus ferforth I have thy werk begon,
Fro daie to daie, till this daie by the morow,
Hir love of frendship have I to thee won,
And therefore hath she laid her faith to borow,
Algate a foote is lameled of thy sorow :”
What should I lenger sermon of it holde,
As ye have heard before, all he him tolde.

But right as floures through the cold of night
Yclosed, stoupen in hir stalkes lowe,
Redressen hem ayen the Sunne bright,
And spreaden in hir kinde course by rowe,
Right so gan tho his eyen up to throwe
This Troilus, and saied : “ O Venus dere,
Thy might, thy grace, yheried be it here.”

And to Pandarus he held up both his bonds,
And saied, “ Lorde all thine be that I have,
For I am hole, and broken been my bonds,
A thousand Troies, who so that me yave

Eche after other, God so wis me save,
Ne might me so gladen, lo mine herte
It spredeth so for joye it woll to starte.

“ But lorde how shall I doen ? how shal I liven,
Whan shall I next my dere herte se ?
How shall this longe time away be driven ?
Till that thou be ayen at her fro me,
Thou maist answere, abide abide : but he
That hangeth by the necke, sothe to saine,
In great disease abideth for the paine.”

“ All easily now, for the love of Marte,”
(Quod Pandarus) “ for every thing hath time,
So long abide, till that the night departe,
For also siker as thou liest here by me,
And God toforne, I woll be there at prime,
And for thy werke somewhat, as I shall say,
Or on some other wight this charge lay.

“ For parde, God wot, I have ever yet
Ben ready thee to serve, and this night
Have I not fained, but enforthe my wit
Doen all thy lust, and shal with al my might :
Doe now as I shall saine, and fare aright :
And if thou n’ilte, wite all thy selfe the care,
On me is nought along thine evill fare.

“ I wote well, that thou wiser art than I
A thousand fold : but if I were as thou,
God helpe me so, as I would utterly
Right of mine owne honde write her now
A letter, in which I would her tellen how
I farde amisse, and her beseech of routh :
Now help thy self, and leave it for no slouth.

“ And I my selfe shall therewith to her gone,
And whan thou wost that I am with her there
Worthe thou upon a courser right anone,
Ye hardely, and that right in thy best gere,
And ride forth by the place, as naught ne were,
And thou shalt find us (if I may) sitting
At some window, into the street looking.

“ And if thee list, then mayest thou us salve,
And upon me make thou thy countenaunce,
But by thy life beware, and fast eschue
To tarien ought, God shild us fro mischaunce :
Ride forth thy way, and hold thy governaunce,
And we shall speake of thee somewhat I trow
Whan thou art gone, to doe thine cares glow.

“ Touching thy letter, thou art wise inough,
I wot thou n’lte it deigneliche endite,
As make it with these argumentes tough,
Ne scribeinishe or craftely thou it write,
Beblotte it with thy teares eke alite,
And if thou write a goodly word all soft,
Though it be good, rehearse it not too oft.

“ For though the best harpoure upon live
Would on the best souned jolly harpe
That ever was, with all his fingers five
Touch aye o string, or aye o warble harpe,
Where his nailes pointed never so sharpe,
It should make every wight to dull,
To heare his glee, and of his strokes full.

“ Ne jombre eke no discordaunt thing yfere,
As thus, to usen tearmes of plisicke,
In loves tearmes hold of thy matere
The forme alway, and doe that it be like,

For if a painter would paint a pike
With asses feet, and headed as an ape,
It cordeth not, so were it but a jape."

This counsaile liked well unto Troilus,
But as a dredefull lover he saied this:
"Alas my dere brother Pandarus,
I am ashamed for to write ywis,
Least of mine innocence I saied amis,
Or that she n'olde it for dispite receive,
Than were I dead, there might it nothing weive."

To that Pandare answerde, "If thee lest,
Do that I say, and let me therewith gone,
For by that Lord that formed east and west,
I hope of it to bring answer anone
Right of her hond, and if that thou n'ilte none,
Let be, and sorrie mote he been his live,
Ayenst thy lust that helpeth thee to thrive."

(Quod Troilus) "Depardieux iche assent,
Sith that thee list, I woll arise and write,
And blisfull God pray iche with good entent
The voiage and the letter I shall endite,
So speed it, and thou Minerva the white,
Yeve thou me witte, my letter to devise:"
And set him down, and wrote right in this wise.

First he gan her his right ladie call,
His hertes life, his lust, his sorowes leche,
His blisse, and eche these other tearmes all,
That in such case ye lovers all seche,
And in full humble wise, as in his speche,
He gan him recommaund unto her grace,
To tell all how, it asketh mokell space.

And after this full lowly he her praied
To be nought wroth, though he of his follie
So hardie was to her to write, and saied
That love it made, or eles must he die,
And pitously gan mercie for to crie :
And after that he saied, and lied full loud,
Himselfe was little wroth, and lasse he coud.

And that she would have his conning excused,
That little was, and eke he dradde her so,
And his unworthinesse aye he accused :
And after that than gan he tell his wo,
But that was endlesse withouten ho :
And said, he would in trouth alway him hold,
And redde it over, and gan the letter fold.

And with his salte teares gan he bathe
The rubie in his signet, and it sette
Upon the wexe deliverliche and rathe,
Therewith a thousand times, er he lette,
He kiste tho the letter that he shette
And sayd, " Letter, a blisfull destine
Thee shapen is, my ladie shall thee see."

This Pandare tooke the letter, and betime
A morrow to his neecis pallaice stert,
And fast he swore, that it was passed prime :
And gan to jape, and sayd, " Ywis my herte
So fresh it is, although it sore smert,
I may not sleepe never a Mayes morrow,
I have a jollie woe, a lustie sorrow."

Creseide whan that she her uncle heard,
With dreadfull herte, and desirous to heare,
The cause of his comming, thus answeard,
" Now by your faith, mine uncle" (quod she)
" deare,

What manner windes guideth you now here?
Tell us your jolly woe, and your penance,
How farre forth be ye put in loves daunce."

"By God" (quod he) "I hop alway behinde,"
And to laugh, it thought her herte brest,
(Quod Pandarus) "Looke alway that ye finde
Game in mine hood: but herkeneth if you lest,
There is right now come into the toun a gest,
A Greeke espie, and telleth newe thinges,
For which I come to tell you new tidinges,

"Into the garden go we, and ye shall heare
All privily of this a long sermoun:"
With that they wenten arm in arm yfere,
Into the gardin fro the chamber down.
And whan he was so farre, that the soun
Of that he spake, no man heren might,
He sayd her thus, and out the letter plight.

"Lo, he that is all hooly yours free,
Him recommaundeth lowly to your grace,
And sent you this letter here by me,
Aviseth you on it, whan ye han space,
And of some goodly answeare you purchase,
Or helpe me God so, plainely for to saine,
He may not longe liven for his paine.

Full dredefully tho gan she stonde still,
And tooke it not, but all her humble chere
Gan for to chaunge, and sayd, "Scripe nor bill,
For love of God, that toucheth such matere
Ne bring me none: and also, uncle dere,
To mine estate have more regard I pray
Than to his lust, what should I more say.

“ And looketh now if this be reasonable,
And letteth not for favour ne for slouth
To saine a sooth, now is it covenable
To mine estate, by God and by my trouth
To take it, or to have of him routh,
In harming of my selfe or in reprove :
Beare it ayen, for him that ye on leve.”

This Pandarus gan on her for to stare,
And sayd, “ Now is this the greatest wonder
That ever I saw, let be this nice fare,
To death mote I smiten be with thunder,
If for the citie which that stondeth yonder,
Would I a letter unto you bring or take,
To harm of you: what list you thus it make.

“ But thus ye faren well nigh all and some,
That he that most desireth you to serve,
Of him ye retch least where he become,
And whether that he live, or else sterve :
But for all that, that ever I may deserve,
Refuse it not ” (quod he) and hent her fast,
And in her bosome the letter doune he thrust.

And said her, “ Now cast it away anon
That folk may seen, and gauren on us twey.”
(Quod she) “ I can abide till they be gon”
And gan to smile, and said him, “ Eme I pray
Such answeere as you list your selfe purvey :
For truely I woll no letter write :”
“ No, than woll I ” (quod he) “ so ye endite.”

Therewith she lough, and said “ Go we dine,”
And he gan at himselfe jopen fast,
And sayd “ Neece, I have so great a pine
For love, that everich other day I fast,”

And gan his best japes forth to cast,
And made her for to laugh at his follie,
That she for laughter wende for to die.

And whan that she was comen into the hall,
“Now eme” (quod she) “we woll go dine anon,”
And gan some of her women to her call,
And streight into her chamber gan she gone,
But of her businesse this was one,
Amonges other thinges, out of drede,
Full prively this letter for to rede.

Avised word by word in every line,
And found no lacke, she thought he coud his good,
And up it put, and went her in to dine,
And Pandarus, that in a studie stood,
Ere he was ware, she tooke him by the hood,
And said “Ye were caught ere that ye wist,
“I vouchsafe,” (quod he) “do what you list.”

Thio weshen they, and set hem down and ete,
And after noone fall slightly Pandarus
Gan draw him to the window nye the strete,
And said, “Neece, who hath araied thus
The yonder house, that stant aforeyene us?”
“Which house?” (quod she) and gan for to behold,
And knew it well, and whose it was him told.

And fellen forth in speech of thinges smale,
And saten in the window both twey :
Whan Pandarus saw time unto his tale,
And saw well that her folke were all away :
“Now nece mine, tell on” (quod he) “I prey,
How liketh you the letter that ye wot,
Can he thereon, for by my trouth I n’ot.”

Therewith all rosy hewed tho woxe she,
And gan to hum, and said, "So I trowe,"
"Aquite him well for Gods love" (quod he)
"My selfe to medes woll the letter sowe,"
And held his hondes up, and sat on knowe,
"Now good nece, be it never so lite,
Yeve me the labour, it to sowe and plite."

"Ye, for I can so writen" (quod she) "tho,
And eke I n'ot what I should to him say :"
"Nay nece" (quod Pandare) "say not so,
Yet at the least, thonketh him I pray
Of his good will : O, doth him not to deye,
Now for the love of me my nece dere,
Refuseth not at this time my praier."

"Depardieux" (quod she) "God leve all be wele,
God helpe me so, this is the first letter
That ever I wrote, ye all or any dele,"
And into a closet for to avise her better,
She went alone, and gan her herte unfetter
Out of disdaines prison, but a lite,
And set her doune, and gan a letter write.

Of which to tell in short is mine entent
Theffect, as ferre as I can understand :
She thonked him, of all that he well ment,
Towardes her, but holden him in hond
She n'olde not, ne make her selven bond
In love, but as his suster him to please,
She would aye faine to done his herte an ease.

She shette it, and to Pandare into gone
There as he sat, and looked into strete,
And doune she set her by him on a stone
Of jasper, upon a quisshen of gold ybete,

And said, "As wisely helpe me God the grete,
I never did a thing with more paine,
Than write this, to which ye me restraine."

And tooke it him: he thonked hir, and seide,
"God wot of thing full often lothe begonne
Commeth end good: and nece mine Creseide,
That ye to him of hard now ben ywonne,
Ought he be glad, by God and yonder sonne:
For why, men saith impressiones light
Full lightly ben aye readie to the flight.

"But ye han plaied the tiraunt all too long,
And hard was it your herte for to grave,
Now stint, that ye no lenger on it hong,
All woulde ye the forme of daunger save,
But hasteth you to done him joye have:
For trusteth well, too long ydone hardnesse
Causeth dispite full often for distresse,"

And right as they declared this matere,
Lo Troilus, right at the stretes end
Came riding with his tenth somme yfere
All softely, and thiderward gan bend
There as they sate, as was his way to wend
To paleis ward, and Pandare him aspidе,
And said, "Nece, ysee who commeth here ride."

"O flie not in, he seeth us I suppose,
Least he may thinken that ye him eschue."
"Nay, nay" (quod she) and woxe as red as rose.
With that he gan her humbly salue
With dredefull chere, and oft his hewes mue,
And up his looke debonairely he cast,
And becked on Pandare, and forth by past.

God wot if he sat on his horse aright,
Or goodly was beseene that ilke day,
God wot where he were like a manly knight,
What should I dretche, or tell of his array :
Creseide, which that all those thinges sey,
To tell in short, her liked all yfere,
His person, his aray, his looke, his chere.

His goodly manner, and his gentillesse,
So well, that never sith that she was borne,
Ne had she suche routh of his distresse,
And how so, she hath hard ben here beforne,
To God hope I, she hath now caught a thorn,
She shall nat pull it out this next wike,
God send her mo such thornes on to pike.

Pandare, which that stood her faste by,
Felt iron hot, and he began to smite,
And said, " Nece, I pray you heartely,
Tell me that I shall asken you alite,
A woman that were of his death to wite
Withouten his gilt, but for her lack of routh,
Were it well done?" (quod she) " Nay by my
trouth."

" God helpe me so" (quod he) " ye say me soothli,
Ye feelen well your selfe that I nought lie,
Lo, yonde he rideth:" (quod she) " Ye so he
dooth:"

" Well" (quod Pandare) " as I have told you thrie,
Let be your nice shame, and your follie,
And speake with him in easing of his herte,
Let nicete nat do you bothe smert."

But thereon was to heaven and to done,
Considering all thing, it may nat be,
And why? for shame, and it were eke too soone

To graunten him so great a liberte:
For plainly hir entent, as (said she)
Was for to love him unwist, if she might,
And guerdon him with nothing but with sight.

But Pandare thought, it shall nat be so,
If that I may, this nice opinion
Shall nat ben holden fully yeares two.
What should I make of this a long sermon?
He must assent on that conclusion,
As for the time, and whan that it was eve,
And all was well, he rose and tooke his leve.

And on his way fast homeward he spedde,
And right for joy he felt his herte daunce,
And Troilus he found alone abedde,
That lay, as done these lovers in a traunce,
Betwixen hope and derke desperaunce,
But Pandare, right at his incomming,
He song, as who saith, "Lo, somewhat I bring."

And said, "Who is in his bedde so soone
Yburied thus?" "It am I friend:" (quod he)
"Who, Troilus? nay, help me so the Moone"
(Quod Pandarus) "thou shalt up rise and see
A charme that was sent right now to thee,
The which can healen thee of thine accesse,
If thou do forthwith all thy businesse."

"Ye, through the might of God:" (quod Troilus)
And Pandarus gan him the letter take,
And said, "Parde God hath holpen us,
Have here a light, and look on all these blake."
But often gan the herte glad and quake
Of Troilus, while he it gan to rede,
So as the wordes yave him hope or drede,

But finally he tooke all for the best
That she him wrote, for somewhat he beheld,
On which he thought he might his herte rest,
All covered she the wordes under sheld,
Thus to the more worthy part he held,
That what for hope, and Pandarus behest,
His greate wo foryede he at the lest.

But as we may all day our selven see,
Through wood or cole kindleth the more fire,
Right so encrease of hope, of what it be,
Therewith full oft encreaseth eke desire,
Or as an oke commeth of a little spire,
So through this letter, which that she him sent,
Encreasen gan desire of which he brent.

Wherfore I say alway, that day and night
This Troilus gan to desiren more
Than he did erst through hope, and did his might
To presen on, as by Pandarus lore,
And writen to her of his sorowes sore
Fro day to day, he let it nought refreide,
That by Pandare he somewhat wrot or seide.

And did also his other observaunces,
That till a lover longeth in this caas,
And after as his dice turned on chaunces,
So was he either glad, or said alas,
And held after his gestes aye his paas,
And after such answeres as he had,
So were his daies sorry either glad.

But to Pandare alway was his recours,
And pitously gan aye on him to plaine,
And him besought of rede, and some socours,
And Pandarus, that saw his wood paine,

Wext well nigh dead for routh, sooth to saine,
And busily with all his herte cast,
Some of his wo to sleen, and that as fast.

And said, “ Lord and friend, and brother dere,
God wot that thy disease doth me wo,
But wolt thou stinten all this wofull chere,
And by my trouth, ere it be daies two,
And God toforne, yet shall I shape it so,
That thou shalt come into a certaine place,
There as thou maist thy self praïen her of grace.

“ And certainly I n’ot if thou it wost,
But they that ben expert in love, it say,
It is one of these thinges forthereth most,
A man to have a leiser for to pray,
And siker place, his wo for to bewray,
For in good herte it mote some routh impress
To heare and see the guiltless in distresse.

“ Peraventure thinkest thou, though it be so,
That Kind would her done for to begin,
To have a manner routh upon my wo,
Saith Daunger nay, thou shalt me never win :
So ruleth her hertes ghost within,
That though she bende, yet she stont on rote,
What in effect is this unto my bote.

“ Think here ayen, whan that the sturdy oke
On which men hacketh ofte for the nones,
Reccived hath the happy falling stroke,
The great swight doth it come all at ones,
As done these great rocks or these miln stones,
For swifter course cometh thing that is of wight
Whan it discendeth, than done thinges light.

“ But rede that boweth doun for every blast,
Full lightly cesse wind, it woll arise,
But so n’ill not an oke, whan it is cast,
It needeth me nought longe thee forvise,
Men shall rejoysen of a great emprise,
Atchieved well, and stant withouten dout,
All have men ben the lenger thereabout.

“ But, Troilus, now tell me if thee lest
A thing, which that I shall asken thee,
Which is thy brother, that thou lovest best,
As in thy very hertes privite ?”

“ Ywis my brother Deiphebus tho” (quod he.)
“ Now” (quod Pandare) “ ere hourestwice twelve,
He shall the ease, unwist of it himselve.

“ Now let me alone, and worken as I may,”
(Quod he) and to Deiphebus went he tho,
Which had his lord, and great friend ben aye,
Save Troilus no man he loved so :
To tellen in short withouten words mo
(Quod Pandarus) “ I pray you that ye be
Friend to a cause, which that toucheth me.”

“ Yes parde” (quod Deiphebus) “ wel thou wotest
All that ever I may, and God tofore,
All n’ere it but for the man I love most,
My brother Troilus ; but say wherefore
It is, for sith the day that I was bore,
I n’as, ne never mo to ben I thinke,
Ayenst a thing that might thee forthinke.”

Pandare gan him thank, and to him seide,
“ Lo sir, I have a lady in this toun
That is my nece, and called is Creseide,
Which some men would done oppressioun,

And wrongfully have her possessioun,
Wherefore I of your lordship you beseech
To ben our friend, withouten more speech."

Deiphebus him answerd: "O, is nat this
That thou speakest of to me thus straungly,
Creseide my friend?" He said him "Yes."
"Than needeth" (quod Deiphebus) "hardely
No more of this to speke, for trusteth well that I
Woll be her champion with spore and yerde,
I ne raught nat though all her foes it herde.

"But tel me how, for thou wost this matere,
I might best availen, now lette see?"
(Quod Pandarus) "If ye my lord so dere
Woulden as now do this honour to me,
To praien her to morrow, lo that she
Came unto you, her complaints to devise,
Her adversaries would of it agrise.

"And if I more durst praien as now,
And chargen you to have so great travaile,
To have some of your brethren here with you,
That mighten to her cause bet availe,
Than wote I well she might never faile
For to ben holpen, what at your instaunce,
What with her other friendes governaunce."

Deiphebus, which that comen was of kind
To all honour and bounty to consent,
Answerd, "It shall be done: and I can find
Yet greater helpe to this mine entent:
What woldest thou saine, if for Heleine I sent
To speake of this? I trow it be the best,
For she may leden Paris as her lest.

“ Of Hector, which that is my lord my brother,
It needeth nat to praien him friend to be,
For I have heard him o time and eke other
Speaken of Creseide such honour, that he
May saine no bet, such hap to him hath she,
It needeth nat his helpes more to crave,
He shall be such, right as we woll him have.

“ Speake thou thy selfe also to Troilus
On my behalfe, and pray him with us dine.”
“ Sir, all this shall be done” (quod Pandarus)
And tooke his leave, and never gan to fine,
But to his neces house as streight as line
He came, and found her fro the meat arise,
And set him down, and spake right in this wise :

He said, “ O very God, so have I ronne,
Lo nece mine, see ye nat how I swete ?
I n’ot where ye the more thanke me conne :
Be ye not ware how false Poliphete
Is now about eftsoones for to plete,
And bring on you advocacies new ?”
“ I, no” (quod she) and chaunged all her hew.

“ What, is he more about me to dretche
And done me wrong, what shall I done, alas,
Yet of himselfe nothing would I retche,
N’ere it for Antenor and Eneas,
That ben his friends in such manner caas :
But for the love of God mine uncle dere,
No force of that, let him have all yfere,

“ Withouten that, I have ynough for us.”
“ Nay” (quod Pandare) “ it shall nothing be so,
For I have ben right now at Deiphebus,
At Hector, and mine other lordes mo,

And shortly maked each of hem his fo,
That by my thrift he shall it never win,
For aught he can, whan so that he begin."

And as they casten what was best to done,
Deiphebus of his owne courtesie
Came her to pray, in his proper persone,
To hold him on the morrow companie
At dinner, which she n'olde not denie,
But goodly gan to his prayer obey,
He thonked her, and went upon his wey.

Whan this was done, this Pandare anone,
To tell in short, forth he gan to wend
To Troilus, as still as any stone,
And all this thing he told him word and end,
And how that he Deiphebus gan to blend,
And said him, " Now is time of that ye conne
To bere thee well to morow, and all is wonne.

" Now speke, now pray, now pitously complain,
Let nat for nice shame, for drede or slouth,
Sometime a man mote tell his owne pain,
Beleeve it, and she woll have on thee routh,
Thou shalt ben saved by thy faith in trouth,
But well wot I, thou now art in a drede,
And what it is, I lay that I can arede.

" Thou thinkest now, ' How should I don al this,
For by my cheres mosten folke espie,
That for her love is that I fare amis,
Yet had I lever unwist for sorrow die :'
Now thinke nat so, for thou hast great follie,
For I right now have founden a manere
Of sleight, for to coveren all thy chere.

Thou shalt gone overnight, and that bilive,
Unto Deiphebus house, as thee to play,
Thy maladie away the bet to drive,
For which thou seemeth sicke, sooth to say,
Soone after that, in thy bed thee lay,
And say thou maist no lenger up endure,
And lie right there, and bide thine aventure.

“ Say that thy fever is wont thee for to take
The same time, and last till a morow,
And let see now how well thou canst it make :
For parde sicke is he that is in sorrow.
Go now farwell, and Venus here to borow,
I hope and thou this purpose hold ferme,
Thy grace she shall fully there conferme.”

(Quod Troilus) “ Ywis thou all needlesse
Counsailest me, that sickeliche I me faine,
For I am sicke in earnest doubtlesse,
So that well nigh I sterve for the paine :”

(Quod Pandarus) “ Thou shalt the better plaine,
And hast the lesse need to counterfete,
For him demeth men hot, that seeth him swete.

“ Lo, hold thee at thy triste close, and I
Shall well the deere unto the bow drive :”
Therewith he tooke his leave all softly,
And Troilus to his paleis went blive,
So glad ne was he never in all his live,
And to Pandarus rede gan all assent,
And to Deiphebus hous at night he went.

What nedeth it you to tellen all the chere
That Deiphebus unto his brother made,
Or his axis, or his sickeliche manere,
How men gone him with clothes for to lade,

Whan he was laid, and how men would him glade.
But all for nought, he held forth aye the wise,
That ye han heard Pandare ere this devise.

But certaine is, ere Troilus him leide,
Deiphebus had praied him over night
To ben a friend, and helping to Crescide :
God wot that he graunted anon right
To ben her full friend with all his might :
But such a need was it to praien him thenne,
As for to bidden a wood man to renne.

The morow came, and nighen gan the time
Of mealtide, that the faire queene Heleine
Shope her to ben an houre after the prime
With Deiphebus, to whom she n'olde faine,
But as his suster, homely sooth to saine
She came to dinner in her plaine entent,
But God and Pandare wist all what this ment.

Came eke Creseide all innocent of this,
Antigone her nece, and Tarbe also,
But flie we now prolixitie best is,
For love of God, and let us fast go
Right to theeffect, withouten tales mo,
Why all this folke assembled in this place,
And let us of all hir salvinges pace.

Great honour did hem Deiphebus certaine,
And fedde hem well, with all that might like,
But evermo alas, was his refraine :
“ My good brother Troilus the sike
Lithe yet,” and therewithall he gan to sike,
And after that he pained him to glade
Hem as he might, and chere good he made.

Complained eke Heleine of his sicknesse
So faithfully, that it pitie was to here,
And every wight gan wexen for axes
A leche anon, and said, "In this manere
Men curen folke, this charme I wol thee lere,"
But there sate one, all list her nat to teche,
That thought, yet best could I ben his leche.

After complaint him gonnen they to preise,
As folk don yet whan some wight hath begon
To preise a man, and with preise him reise
A thousand fold yet higher than the Sonne,
He is, he can, that few other lordes conne,
And Pandarus of that they would afferme,
He nought forgate hir praising to conferme.

Herd all this thing fair Creseide well enough,
And every word gan for to notifie,
For which with sober chere her herte lough,
For who is that ne would her glorifie,
To mowen such a knight done live or die?
But all passe I, least ye too long ydwell,
But for o fine is all that ever I tell.

The time came, fro dinner for to rise,
And as hem ought, arisen everychone,
And gane a while of this and that devise,
But Pandarus brake all this speech anone,
And said to Deiphebus, "Woll ye gone,
If your will be, as erst I you preide,
To speaken of the nedes of Creseide?"

Heleine, which that by the hond her held,
Tooke first the tale, and said, "Go we blive,"
And goodly on Creseide she beheld,
And said, "Joves let him never thrive

That doth you harm, and reve him sone of live,
And yeve me sorrow, but he shall it rue,
If that I may, and all folke be true."

"Tell thou thy nieces case" (quod Deiphebus
To Pandarus) "for thou canst best it tell."

"My lordes and my ladies, it stant thus,
What should I lenger" (quod he) "do youdwell?"
He rong hem out a proces like a bell
Upon her foe, that hight Poliphete,
So hainous, that men might on it spete.

Answerd of this ech worse of hem than other,
And Poliphete they gonnen thus to warien,
And honged be such one, were he my brother,
And so he shall, for it ne may nought varien,
What should I lenger in this tale tarien,
Plaineliche all at ones they her highten
To ben her friend in all that ever they mighten.

Spake then Heleine, and said, "Pandarus,
Wot aught my lord my brother of this mater,
I meane Hector, or wote it Troilus?"
He said, "Ye, but woll ye me now here,
Me thinketh thus, sith that Troilus is here,
It were good, if that ye would assent,
She told him her selfe all this ere she went.

"For he wol have the more hir grefe at herte,
Because lo, that she a lady is,
And by your will, I woll but in right start,
And do you wete, and that anone ywis,
If that he sleepe, or woll aught here of this:"
And in he lept, and said him in his ere,
"God have thy soul, for brought have I thy bere."

To smilen of this gan tho Troilus,
And Pandarus without reckoning,
Out went anon to Heleine and Deiphebus,
And said hem, "So there be no tarying
Ne more prease, he woll well that ye bring
Creseide my lady, that is now here,
And as he may endure, he woll her here.

"But well ye wote, the chamber is but lite,
And few folke may lightly make it warme,
Now looketh ye, for I woll have no wite
To bring in prease, that might done him harme,
Or him diseasen, for my better arme :
Yet were it bette she bid till oft soonis,
Now looke ye that knowen what to don is.

"I say for me best is, as I can know,
That no wight in ne wende, but ye twey,
But it were I, for I cannot in a throw
Rehearse her case, unlike that she can sey,
And after this she may him ones prey
To ben good lord in short, and take her leve,
This may not mokell of his ease him reve.

"And eke for she is straunge, he woll forbere
His ease, which that him dare nat for you,
Eke other thing, that toucheth nat to her,
He woll it tell, I wote it well right now,
That secret is, and for the townes prow :"
And they that knew nothing of his entent,
Without more, to Troilus in they went.

Heleine in all her goodly softe wise
Gan him salue, and womanly to play,
And saied, "Ywis, ye mote algate arise :
Now faire brother be all hole I pray,"

And gan her arme right over his shoulder lay,
And him with all her wit to recomfort,
As she best could, she gan him to disport.

So after this (quod she) "We you beseke
My dere brother Deiphebus and I,
For love of God, and so doeth Pandare eke,
To been good lord and friend right hertely
Unto Creseide, which that certainly
Received wrong, as wot well here Pandare,
That can her case well bet than I declare."

This Pandarus gan new his tong affile,
And all her case rehearse, and that anone,
Whan it was saied, soone after in a while,
(Quod Troilus) "As soone as I was gone,
I wol right faine with all my might ben one,
Have God my trouth, her cause to susteine."
"Now good thrift have ye" (quod Helein the
queen.)

(Quod Pandarus) "And it your will be,
That she may take her leave ere that she go."

"O cles God forbid it tho" (quod he)

"If that she vouchsafe for to do so:"

And with that word (quod Troilus) "ye two
Deiphebus, and my suster lefe and dere,
To you have I to speake of a matere,

"To been avised by your rede the better,"
And found (as hap was) at his bedes hedde
The copie of a treatise, and a letter
That Hector had him sent, to asken rede
If such a man was worthy to ben dede,
Wote I naught who, but in a grisly wise
He prayed hem anone on it avise.

Deiphebus gan this letter for to unfold
In earnest great, so did Heleine the queene,
And roming outward, fast it gonne behold
Dounward a steire, into an herbor greene:
This ilke thing they redden hem betwene,
And largely the mountenaunce of an houre
They gonne on it to reden and to poure.

Now let hem rede, and tourne we anone
To Pandarus, that gan full soft prie
That all was well, and out he gan to gone
Into the great chamber, and that in hie,
And saied, "God save all this companie:
Come nece mine, my lady queene Heleine
Abideth you, and eke my lordes tweine.

"Rise, take with you your nece Antigone,
Or whom you list, or no force hardely.
The lasse prease the bet, come forth with me,
And looke that ye thonked humbly
Hem all three, and whan ye may goodly
Your time ysee, taketh of hem your leave,
Least we too long his restes him bireave."

All innocent of Pandarus entent
(Quod tho Creseide) "Go we uncle dere,"
And arme in arme, inward with him she went,
Avising well her wordes and her chere,
And Pandarus in earnestfull manere,
Saied, "All folke for Godes love I pray,
Stinteth right here, and softly you play.

"Aviseth you what folke ben here withlin.
And in what plite one is, God him amend,
And inward thus full softly begin,
Nece I conjure, and highly you defend

On his halfe, which that soule us all send,
And in the vertue of corounes twaine
Slea nat this man, that hath for you this paine.

“Fie on the devill, thinke which one he is,
And in what plite he lieth, come off anone,
Think all such taried tide but lost it n’is,
That woll ye both saine, whan ye been one :
Secondly, there yet divineth none
Upon you two, come off now if ye conne,
While folke is blent, lo, all the time is wonne.

In titering and pursuite, and delaies
The folke divine, at wegging of a stre,
And though ye would han after merry daies,
Than dare ye nat, and why? For she and she
Spake such a word, thus looked he and he :
Least time be lost, I dare not with you deale,
Come off therfore, and bringeth him to heale.”

But now to you, ye lovers that ben here,
Was Troilus nat in a cankedort,
That lay, and might the wispring of hem here,
And thoght “O lord, right now renneth my sort
Fully to die, or have anone comforte,”
And was the first time he should her pray
Of love, O mightie God, what shall he say !

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